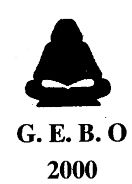
M.M. ENANI

ON TRANSLATING ARABIC:
A Cultural Approach



G. E. B. O
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Table of Contents

Preface

This is not a course in translation theory or, indeed, in translation practice; nor does it attempt to overturn any of the current 'theories' or 'systems' in translation studies. Its specific aim is to fill a gap, recently recognized, in the approach to the translation of Arabic texts, and the translation of English texts into Arabic. The gap is easily recognizable in modern books on translation which deal with Arabic as a modern language capable of analysis in the way modern linguistics has dealt with modern European (and other) languages. The fact is, however, that Arabic is far from being such a language. True, scholars have made distinctions between 'kinds' of Arabic, but they have focused on the separation, using the formalizations of modern linguistic sciences, of the spoken variety of Arabic (in each or some Arab countries) from the written variety which is, indeed, modern (on the whole) — hence the designation Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). But the spoken variety is no less modern. A cultural approach, which should fill this gap, will show that another variety of Arabic, namely archaic Arabic, the language which is still, paradoxically, very much alive in our tradition, especially in the Muslim scriptures, still informs much of both modern versions of Arabic and often interferes with our understanding of even the most patently modern texts. A different culture informs that archaic language and although defunct (on the whole again) and never felt to be *real* by any modern Arab, it does vie for supremacy with modern culture. The rise of the religious discourse in the Arab world since the 1970s, not necessarily bound up with Muslim 'Fundamentalism', has given a new lease of life to that archaic culture and its linguistic terms.

Many people now read old Arabic books, but they read them as though they were written in MSA or as though they pertain to our modern life; and many writers now mix their MSA with references, however vaguely understood, even misunderstood, to such an archaic culture. If the reader or the writer happens to be a translator, such miscomprehensions may bring in boundless semantic distortions. Hence my cultural approach and my claim that a diachronic approach to Arabic can help the serious translator.

If there is one hope to express at the outset, it is that the reader, who is ideally assumed to have a working knowledge of Arabic, will realize that Arabic is different, and that the synchronic approach adopted in modern linguistics will never be enough. To assume, as Mona Baker does in her excellent book, that MSA is the only version of written Arabic, or to assume, as some modern linguists tend to do, that the spoken varieties (Egyptian, Syrian, North African ... etc.) are the only living 'languages' to be dealt with, is to oversimplify matters. As belonging to modern culture, both, if culturally approached, will be found to share much more with one another then they share with archaic Arabic. And, if it is the *meaning* that matters to the translator, the implications of each culture will be at least as important as the structural and formal aspects of these 'languages'. Sometimes the establishment of a given meaning (or meanings) will depend entirely on that diachronic approach, as I hope to show in the Introduction and the chapters that follow.

The chapters of this book were published separately in books and periodicals over the last six years (1995-2000) but they all deal with my central thesis, as stated above. A modicum of repetition is unavoidable,

therefore, and I have not tried to remedy that in putting them together in the present form. I have, however, arranged the material in a more or less 'ascending' order, beginning with an 'appetizer' in chapter one, and advancing to the substance of my thesis in chapter two where Wittgenstein's 'family resemblances' is used as a good working metaphor. It has helped me to establish such resemblances as are to be found between different interpretations of a given text which are attributable to a single cultural family. Arabic versions are sometimes given in both MSA and Egyptian Arabic which, for all their differences in morphology, syntax, phonology and other important features, are found to share the same modern culture which determines much of their meaning. I repeat : the written and the spoken have their differences which cannot be minimized; but these are less relevant to the work of the translator than their common cultural matrix.

In the second part of the book I deal with translating into Arabic as often influenced by 'lexical limitation', erroneously ascribed to intuition and a vaguely conceived bilinguality, and conclude with the assertion that in translating literature, one is driven by one's own native tradition or culture. An annotated exercise in reading the poetry of Wordsworth (often described as very English, as opposed to Shelley or even Byron) is given to show that even interpretation is controlled by culture. The interaction between the translator's literary (and cultural) traditions is sometimes based on subliminal comparisons, as seen in the intertextuality of the translated text. Hence the need for a 'practical' account of this process in the last chapter. My claim that there are links between translation, as a cultural exercise, and comparative literature (made in *The Comparative Tone*, Cairo, 1995 and *Comparative Moments*, Cairo, 1996) is supported by A. Bassnet. However, the field

is far from being fully tilled and calls for more efforts to be made along the same or different lines.

I should finally acknowledge the assistance I have received from my friend and colleague, Professor M.S. Farid, of Cairo University, and from members of the Arabic Language Academy where I have been working as an 'expert' since my election to that post in 1997. My references are too many to give in full, and there may be gaps in my bibliography; but then they are mostly acknowledged in the course of the book. I hope I shall be forgiven for any obvious omission.

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Introduction

As a practising translator for well over 40 years, during which I had more than my fair share of the usual headaches, I have been made increasingly aware of the peculiar difficulty of Arabic. Everybody about me spoke of the duality of our language — the famous division of Arabic into 'classical' الفصحى and 'colloquial' العامية . The growth of modern linguistics during the same period has enabled us to refine our terms. The former has been renamed Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) — and defined as the *written* language used in all branches of learning and the media all over the Arab world with insignificant local variations. The latter has been renamed 'local Arabic', and described according to the place where it is *spoken* — Egyptian Arabic, Syrian Arabic etc. The distinction has had its use, and has indeed helped the linguists to undertake synchronic studies of the latter, mainly, as the living language to which modern linguistic theories may be applied. Serious Arabists have not been satisfied with the division, and another brand of Arabic has been specified and described, namely archaic Arabic. The living (spoken) language(s) came later to be subdivided according to 'levels' (three). No final agreement has been reached on the separation of one from the other and the controversy still rages. But few, if any, seem willing to approach any of these 'brands' in terms of culture, even in 'pragmatics' where this is absolutely necessary : only contemporary culture has been studied, naturally, without any attempt to relate it to possible roots in the tradition. The presiding assumption in the minds of the modern Arab linguists has always been that, regardless of any similarities or connections it may have with MSA, the local 'brand'

must be seen as an independent 'language' and may therefore be studied in the same way studies are made of modern European languages. I was a witness to an early attempt in this regard, having helped Professor Hilary Wise of London University during her work for the Ph.D. in the late 1960s on the transformational grammar of Egyptian Arabic. I was an 'informant' and my comments were generally welcome, but whenever I tried to bring in a reference to MSA or to archaic Arabic I was politely told that 'it was irrelevant'. Throughout the latter part of the twentieth century many studies were made of that 'language' but very few, if any, of MSA. The academic community has been almost fully convinced that any talk about 'duality' must refer to the existence of two languages, one for thought and speech (the local) the other for writing but perhaps not so much for 'thought' (MSA).

With the growing interest in translation, and the emerging rivalry between different approaches to the study of translation as an *academic discipline*, linguists could no longer afford to disregard the written variety, as most (in fact, the overwhelming majority of) translations are made into and from MSA. The findings of the linguists, all based on the 'local' language, could not be easily applied to MSA; and the pioneers of Arabic linguistics (studied at departments of foreign languages in Egypt — mainly in departments of English) had to adjust their academic tools. It was not easy, as old Arabic grammar (the grammar of archaic Arabic) still applied to MSA, and they could not dispense with it at a stroke. Indeed, how could you apply the rules of a spoken language to one that is not 'spoken' ? The easy way out was, therefore, to disregard archaic Arabic altogether, and deal with MSA as a modern version of it, confining the contrast to that between both written forms of Arabic, lumped together as 'classical' Arabic, a highly misleading term, and the

spoken language, locally defined. Semantics was never called upon to help; no one ever dared to study semantics as an independent discipline, and those who did so in Arabic were happy to accept Jespersen, having never heard of Lyons or Jackendoff.

The 1990s saw an unprecedented upsurge in translation studies worldwide, and some (such as those by Reiss, Vermeer and Nord) by-passed 'linguistics' altogether. The translation series published by Routledge dealt with a number of issues never before handled, adequately and fully, in this area, notably culture; and the books written by practising translators have shown that any formalized approach to translation studies could not yield many worthwhile results.

Drawing on my own experience as a translator, I have come to the conclusion that there is indeed a duality in Arabic — but the duality is less between the 'local' language and MSA, than between both of them on the one hand and archaic Arabic on the other. The idea may be startling to an English reader brought up on the synchronicity of his or her language, and conscious only of such variations in meaning and structure as may be found in older, though still modern texts. An English reader will find it difficult to accept that a whole language has been rendered obsolete and a totally new one taken shape — which is not the case, anyway, as I shall soon explain — but the fact remains that the Arabic of our forefathers carried a whole cultural tradition which disappeared with them, and the Arabic we write today (and occasionally speak) is the product of the culture of our own time, worldwide. Meanings and structures have vanished, though the words survive, — many of them, that is; and other meanings and structures have appeared, mostly as a result of exposure to European culture. The

problem is that the words with the changed meanings are still being used, without being totally freed from old senses. There is little difficulty in getting to know the meaning of an obsolete word : Arabic dictionaries are perfect depositories of them. Nor can it be difficult to know what a word had meant to our forefathers when it occurs in an ancient context : the context (and the dictionary, of course) will explain what the writer (or speaker) must have had in mind. But it is difficult sometimes to tell whether a modern writer has the ancient sense in mind even when the context is all in MSA; divisions and distinctions rely mostly on interpretation, and sometimes error is inevitable.

This is the central problem of translating Arabic. Equations between the spoken and the written varieties of Arabic (MSA and Egyptian Arabic) are common; and there have been attempts to 'elevate' the 'lower' versions of the spoken language (so described, with obvious reservations, because used by the illiterate or uneducated) to 'higher' levels with the ultimate aim of approaching MSA. Professor Muhammad Mandour would call 'higher' Egyptian Arabic 'eloquent or rich colloquial' (العامية الجزلة) ; Professor El-Said Badawi would call it 'the colloquial of the educated' (عامية المثقفين) . This is supposed to maintain the syntactic features of the local version though using words with definite or 'learned' meanings. Another attempt by the redoubtable Tewfik El-Hakim aimed at using a 'third language', that is, a 'midway' language (that is, one that can be classified as somewhere 'between' Egyptian Arabic and MSA) in dramatic dialogue. A dramatist and a novelist, he had to concede that any dialogue in MSA was simply 'unreal' : it would in all cases be a translation of the 'real' dialogue taking place in (spoken) Egyptian Arabic into MSA (the written language). The so-called 'third' or 'midway' language was, however,

stillborn. When Al-Hakim's work came to be staged, it was either 'translated' into Egyptian Arabic (such as happened in his الورطة ("The Dilemma") which was done into Egyptian Arabic and given a different title : مجرم تحت الاختبار ("An offender tested") — or presented in its original form which proved to be still in MSA, however *simplified* (such as *Pygmalion*, *The Bargain* ... etc.) The simplification brought the language closer to Egyptian Arabic, but did not change its character, at least in so far as the grammar was concerned. Even the titles of the MSA and Egyptian Arabic versions given above can be read either as MSA or Egyptian. The fact is that the channels connecting the two languages are not only "open" but constitute "vital links". Sometimes all you need to do in order to change the one into the other is to change the "declensions", the signs at words-ends which indicate their "character", and this was what Al-Hakim did on many occasions. Professor Shawqi Daif, the President of the Arabic Language Academy, proceeding, like Professor Badawi, from the assumption that the two varieties of Arabic are in effect two versions of the same language, wrote a whole book on corruptions in Egyptian Arabic of the "classical" language, in which he claims that if freed from such corruptions, Egyptian Arabic would be seen as "classical" or as MSA. No modern linguist would agree, as the thrust of the whole 'movement', initiated by Chomsky, has been syntactical, and, for all the ramification and the qualifications, the formal aspects have been focused on as constituting a solid basis for 'scientific' analysis. The fact that the 'dual' المثنّى does not exist in Egyptian Arabic and is consistently replaced by the plural (a natural enough historical development) is more important for the modern linguist than the fact that الورطة means the same thing in both versions of Arabic; or that مجرم تحت الاختبار where the last letters of the words are

not followed by vowels (in the Egyptian version) can, with the vowels provided (the signs of declension), mean the same thing to all Arabs, everywhere (MSA). But this feature, purely semantic, is all-important to the translator. The open channels between the spoken and the written varieties of Arabic, described as vital links, are due to the ONE culture they share. And the translator often moves freely from one variety of version of Arabic to the other, sometimes unconsciously : when writing, he or she may translate the Egyptian expression or word occurring to his mind into an assumed equivalent in MSA; and when speaking, he or she may translate in the opposite direction. And in either case, the determining factor is the common culture they share.

Now to the 'test' expression referred to above. The title of Al-Hakim's play is used in both versions of Arabic to mean a variety of things — a quagmire, a quandary, a predicament, a dilemma or involvement. Having put these down, deliberately off-hand, I now give the full entry from *Hans Wehr* :

> difficult(1) or critical(2) situation, difficulty, trouble(3), plight(4), predicament(5), awkward position(6), dilemma(7), fix(8), jam(9); embroilment(10), bad entanglement(11).

Of the eleven 'senses' (assuming that a difficult situation is almost synonymous with difficulty) two occur in my off-hand list. Being aware of the archaic sense of the word I gave also 'quagmire' which shares the 'primary' physical sense of the word; but 'quandary' is only a variation on the figurative sense. I call it 'primary' rather rashly, following the traditionally accepted view that most Arabic abstractions have a 'primary' physical sense. Here is what the Arabic Language Academy Dictionary (ALA) (الوسيط) says :

الورطة : أرض منخفضة لا طريق فيها ، والورطة الهـوة الغامضة العميقة فى الأرض ، والورطة الوحل ، والورطة كل أمر تعـسر النجاة منه ، والورطة الهلكة .

(1) a land depression with no thoroughfare / road / pathway;
(2) a deep mysterious ditch; (3) mire, mud;
(4) any situation difficult to survive / to emerge from;
(5) death, a fatal situation.

Some of the senses of the word have, obviously, become obsolete; and they are useful only to the reader / translator dealing with archaic texts, especially senses 1, 2 and 5. The verb أورط has more obsolete senses which belong to a definitely defunct culture :

١- (أورط) فلاناً : أوقعـه فى الورطة ، وأورط إبله : سترها ، وأورط إبله فى إبلٍ أخـرى : غـيـبـها ، وأورط الجـرير فى عنق البعـيـر : جعل طرفـه فى حلقتـه ثم جذبه حتى يـخنقه ، وأورط الشيء ستره .

٢- (وارطه) موارطةً و وراطًا : خادعه .

٣- (ورّطه) أورطه .

٤- (تورط) مطاوع ورّط . . . و تورط هلك . . .

٥- (استورط) . . . هلك

1. (—) to cause to fall into a quagmire;
   (—) to conceal one's camels;
   (—) to cause one's camels to disappear among the camels of someone else;
   (—) to put the rope round the camel's neck : to insert the end in the noose and pull so as to throttle the camel;
   (—) to hide something.

2. (—) to deceive (repeatedly).

3. (—) same as above.

4. (—) present tense form; to die.

5. (—) to die.

The senses indicated here are those that belong to a different use of language defined purely in cultural terms. We use (الورطة) in both MSA and Egyptian Arabic in the senses given by Hans Wehr, whether my own added sense is provided or not; we, in other words, deal with the modern cultural brand of our language, not with any of the senses of the archaic culture. Al-Hakim could not be assumed to have had any of the ancient senses in mind but — and this is a very important 'but' — there is no guarantee that a writer will not have one of those senses in mind ! Hence the 'quandary' of the interpreter / translator !

Nor is the problem confined to single words, the 'lexical items' spurned by the linguists; problems of idiom, dealt with in my opening chapter, and those of 'usage' attributed to structure are there and must be dealt with at all times. Even the title given to the Egyptian Arabic version of the play (مجرم تحت الاختبار) can be a 'test' case for an expression apparently modern but possibly not so modern; the key being the structure involving the mercurial preposition (تحت). The combination of (تحت + something) is an innovation in this sense, for the old use is predominantly physical (تحت الشجرة = under the tree) and the figurative use in archaic Arabic did not mean the same thing. When an ancient Arab said :

إني أقعد تحت قول القائل « سرعان ما يضيع مال الأحمق »

The meaning would be "I adopt [as a motto] the saying that a fool and his money are soon parted". In MSA the preposition has been adopted

in 'naturalizing' many English expressions from "under surveillance = تحت المراقبة and "under (in) any circumstances = تحت (في) أي ظروف " to "on probation = تحت الاختبار (consider تحت التمرين = a trainee; تحت الطلب = available ... etc). Even the solecism "under (below) the belt" has become « تحت الحــزام » ! The expression تحت الاختبار in the title of Al-Hakim's play may thus be ambiguous, but the ambiguity is due to factors pretaining to modern culture. The key word اختبار is, in the sense of a 'test' (the Biblical 'experience' or 'temptation' and the Quranic بلاء وابتلاء) can lead to 'trials and tribulations'. But the title مجرم تحت الاختبار can never be done in archaic cultural terms as the 'plight of a transgressor' or the 'experience of a sinner', for the modern cultural context forces us to opt for the contemporary meaning of مجرم as a criminal or an offender rather than for the ancient sense to be found in Muslim scriptures (examples of the use of the term in the Quran in the sense of *infidels* are numerous).

The problem is not simply that we have two linguistic modes, one archaic, the other modern, and that we are required to deal with each independently. If this were the case, in fact, there would be no problem at all : adjust your 'semantic' apparatus or adapt it to the mode in question and you won't lose your way. The problem is how can we be sure that reference is made to one rather than the other. In so far as MSA relies heavily on archaic Arabic words and structures, the archaic and modern modes may easily overlap and are sometimes intertwined. In the translation of archaic texts one can force oneself to stick to the ancient sense, if one can tell what it is (which very few people can); but in translating MSA confusion is likely to occur as some words and expressions will be capable of interpretation in both modes *at once*.

A heightened consciousness of the cultural dimension of Arabic is therefore essential : and for that a synchronic approach will never be enough. With Egyptian Arabic the confusion will be next to nil : it is the spoken language, and we have every fragment in a living context that does dictate a most probable line of meaning. We have situations, and we may benefit by 'pragmatics' in getting the 'right' interpretation. Though sharing the same culture, MSA presents several problems, at least in so far as the context can never be established with the same precision. If in Egyptian Arabic you say,

« أنا بأقول لك بس من باب العلم بالشيء »

Your meaning would simply be "Oh, I just wanted you to know" or "I'm telling you this only for information". When the word العلم occurs in MSA it may refer to 'learning', to 'knowledge', or to modern 'science', according to the context in which it occurs, and it will be found to correspond to the uses it is put to in Egyptian Arabic (EA) :

١- أ - إنه شديد الكراهية للعلم (MSA)

ب- بيكره العلم جداً (EA)

That is "he is averse to learning / he hates learning very much".

٢- أ - إنه رجل علم ومعرفة (MSA)

ب- ده راجل علم ومعرفة (EA)

That is "he is a man of erudition / he is a true scholar".

٣- أ - لا علم لديه بما حدث (MSA)

ب- ما عندوش علم باللى حصل (EA)

ب١- ما يعرفش إللى حصل (EA)

That is "he has no knowledge of what happened / he does not know what happened".

٤- أ -إذا كان عقله علمياً لرفض الخرافات (MSA)

ب- لو كان عقله علمى كان كدّب الخرافات (EA)

That is "If he had a scientific bent of mind, he would reject superstitions / would not believe superstitions". But the old sense of علم as it exists in our tradition is different : *all the usual senses of the word* are there, except the modern sense of the physical *sciences*. The Arabic noun has, however, a meaning which survives only in a religious sense, namely the certain knowledge imparted by faith, sometimes with the suggestion of a knowledge of the earlier scriptures (علم الكتاب) . This survives in the adjective 'a learned man' and the learned men are the *ulemas*, Anglicized to indicate the Islamic sense. The word and its cognates occur in 790 verses in the Quran, and the context alone will never by itself establish a *definite* interpretation : a cultural approach is essential for an *approximation* of the meaning 'intended'. Even so, there will be variations, albeit individual, suggesting what I shall call 'family resemblances'; but they will all belong to the ancient family and may all be acceptable. The real difficulty occurs when a modern writer uses the word with the ancient sense implied, or potentially implied, by the context. Recent attempts to overcome this early sense, so essential to the Arabic word, as the Quran amply illustrates, by using it in the plural, as in the *Faculty of Science* كليــة العلوم , have left a hurdle uncleared namely, دار العلوم – *Dar el-Uloum*, i.e. literally the House of Learning or of Sciences, an early college, now a fully fledged faculty of the university of Cairo, (recently renamed كليــة دار العلوم) which is devoted to the study of traditional Arabic and *Islamic* subjects. More

recently, UNESCO, as though despairing of the plural, has changed its name (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) from the old منظمة الأمم المتحدة للتربية والعلوم والثقافة to one replacing العلوم with العلم claiming that the adjective refers to a more specific pursuit. The problem persists : are we to construe the word which occurs in a mid-twentieth century context, by a most distinguished modernist like Taha Hussein, in the old or in the new sense ? Consider :

كان الأزهر معهداً يدرس فيه العلم ، لأنه العلم ، لا يحد الدرس فيه إلا بطاقة الأستاذ المعلم والطالب المتعلم ، وكانت حرية الدرس فى الأزهر كأحسن ما تكون حرية الدرس سعة وانطلاقاً ، يصطدم فيه الرأى بالرأى ، والمذهب بالمذهب ، فلا ينشأ عن هذا الإصطدام إلا ما يكون من الحوار العنيف والجدال الشديد الذى يذكى جذوة البحث ، ويزيد خصب العقل ، ونفاذ البصيرة وحدة الملكات .

(أوراق مجهولة للدكتور طه حسين - ١٩٩٧) ، ص١٠٨

Al-Azhar was an educational institute where knowledge was imparted, simply because it was knowledge. No limits were set to the pursuit of knowledge, apart from the capacities of both learner and teacher. The freedom of learning in Al-Azhar was ideal in its freedom and unrestricted scope. Opinions clashed and doctrines jostled, with the outcome confined to heated conversations and cogent arguments. This promoted better research, richer minds, deeper insights, and sharper faculties.

This is, of course, a *very* tentative rendering; the purpose is only to show that the ancient sense may be implied in a modern context, and that my '*knowledge*' may easily be replaced by 'religious scholarship'.

And 'scholarship' is suggested, anyway, in our modern culture, religious or otherwise. The Arab reader will notice that I have omitted the concluding metaphors : for 'kindles' the fire of research' I have 'made for / promoted better research'; for 'increased the fertility of the minds' I have 'enriched / made the minds richer'. I have also sacrificed the parallelisms of that typical Husseini style, as my concern has been with the problem word. The Arab reader may have noticed that in the examples I coupled the word « علم » with the generally synonymous معرفة existing as a combination in both MSA and EA. The verb عَرَفَ and its cognates are used in only 70 verses in the Quran, with 38 in the form of the famous noun المعروف which has little to connect it with the basic meaning of the verb ('to know'). Sometimes the expression بالمعروف or بمعروف means something like 'amicably / peacefully / charitably / honestly ... etc.' The noun معروف — always used as an adjective (4 verses) or an adverb (2 verses) — has the same range of meanings (outside the Quran it also means a 'favour', 'a good turn'). Of the cognates in the Quran there are certain words unrelated to knowledge — اعترف in two forms; العُرف (conventions) with the plural الأعراف which in the Quran has the meaning of the wall separating heaven from hell, (Limbo ?), but outside the Quran has the equally old meaning of 'mountains' (and the MSA meaning of 'customs and manners'). There is also عرفات — the name of a well known mountain in Mecca. Thus the verb in the sense of 'to know' occurs no more than 24 times, but المعرفة (ma'rifah) NEVER occurs in the Quran. Nor does the plural معارف used by the UN Arabic translators as a possible solution for the confusion of علم and معرفة and used in many Arab countries in the name of the ministry of education (وزارة المعارف) . The old sense of the plural is simply 'features' or 'face'; or, of course, 'acquaintances' or 'well

known people' — a sense which survives. Another obsolete sense of the plural is the 'crest' or 'feathered comb' of a bird or the front of a horse's head being the plural of معرَفة (ma'rafah). In Arabic grammar, of course, the noun preceded by the definite article is معرفة but this sense will always be there !

Nothing may, in fact, show the indispensability of the cultural approach to translation better than a comparison between the old and modern distinctions between العلم and المعرفة . Al-Sharif Al-Jurjani in his '*Definitions*' (التعريفات) — a work of great importance, probably written in the early 15th century A.D., possibly after Ibn Khuldoun's *Prolegomenon*, gives the following distinction of المعرفة having referred to the grammatical sense first :

> والمعرفة أيضاً إدراك الشيء على ما هو عليه ، وهي مسبوقة بجهل ، بخلاف العلم . ولذلك يسمى الحق تعالى بالعالم دون العارف .
>
> (طبعة القاهرة -- تحقيق إبراهيم الابيارى ، ١٩٨٣ ، ص٣٨٢)
>
> [The term] means also a knowledge of something as it is, which is preceded by ignorance, in contrast with العلم — this is why the True One (God) is called العالم not العارف ".

In a branch of philosophical study initiated by the ***Brethren of Purity*** (اخوان الصفا) and termed الكُلّيات (hypernyms) العلم is used to refer to a "knowledge of a superordinate that is, anything of a composite nature, anything with a hypernym, while المعرفة is used for meronyms or primes; that is why the latter is used in referring to any kind of knowledge of God, never the former" (cf. *Muslim Neo-Platonists*, by Ian Netton, London, 1984). This distinction is obviously lost now, though it may

account for the coupling of العلم and المعرفة in everyday language. The modern distinction is totally different. The latter (المعرفة) has been almost confined to the humanities where it is mostly used in contexts of 'epistemology' نظرية المعرفة and 'cognition' اكتساب المعرفة . An adjective has been introduced in MSA, namely معرفى to carry the meaning of 'cognitive' or, occasionally, 'epistemological'; the former (العلم) is almost exclusively reserved for the natural sciences and for such human sciences as aspire to the certainty of say, physics or chemistry. When we speak of المنهج العلمى we usually have the modern *scientific method* in mind.

The old and modern distinctions are irreconcilable : you have to opt for one or the other, even in contexts where *both* may be suggested. Sometimes the writer, having been exposed for too long to ancient texts, involuntarily uses the word in an ancient sense before reverting to its MSA use. Sometimes you could discover a plagiarist solely on the basis of the 'senses' he 'intends' for his words (more of this later).

Similarly, *al-Hukm* (الحكم) a famous Arabic word, is used to refer, as an immediate 'signified', to *judgment*, but has a multitude of other meanings in different contexts. The original or the most obvious and direct meaning is retained in such works as Kant's *Critique of Judgment* نقد الحكم where the term means 'understanding, good sense, discrimination' as is implied by the Quranic verse « آتيناه حكماً وعلماً » (Joseph, 22) (to him we gave judgment and knowledge). To this sense is allied the noun, another difficult abstraction, الحكمة – commonly rendered as 'wisdom', though in the Quran it can have the added meaning of 'profound discretion, good reasoning, or correct insight' as it is often 'collocated' with (the Revelation or the Book) as in the

verses (البقرة : الآية ٢٣١) « وما أنزل عليكم من الكتاب والحكمة » and in ten other verses. The original meaning of discrimination is retained in another context, namely in the verse « وآتيناه الحكمة وفصل الخطاب » (سورة ص - الآية ٢٠) where it is associated with the 'ability to decide, or to determine' and thus confirms that meaning of judgment. Similarly, the Bible adds another dimension to the more generalized meaning, which is justice or right (righteousness) or equity, *Isaiah*. (61/8) "For I the Lord love Judgment" – alternatively rendered in the Revised English Bible as *Justice*. How close the two meanings are can be seen from the other noun, again used significantly in the Quran with reference to God, الحكيم or الحاكم . The two morphological versions in Arabic can be regarded as equivalents, though the difference in implication will always depend on the context : the comparative أحكم may be used with each أحكم الحاكمين (the wisest of the wise) as in the famous verse « أليس الله بأحكم الحاكمين » (*The fig*, 8) "Is not God the justest of the Judges ?) (Arberry) "Is not Allah the Wisest of all judges ? (Pickthall) "Is not God the wisest of judges ?" (Yusuf Ali) The other plural of حاكم – namely الحكام – is also meant to refer to the judges, as in verse 188 of *The Cow*, and all translators agree.

Today this intrinsic Arabic meaning of the word and its cognates is confined to the work of the judiciary, under the influence of the recent changes in the structure of the modern state. The judge is no longer حاكم but قاضي ; though the sentences he passes are أحكام . Incidentally, the term 'verdict' is also rendered as حكم (in effect a judgment on the guilt or innocence of the defendant only) whilst a sentence is closer to the Arabic عقوبة (penalty – normally a term of imprisonment, though we still hear of capital punishment which is the death penalty (الحكم بالاعدام), and of people 'sentenced to death'). The word حكم has in legal jargon

come to mean any court decision, but the plural is also used (أحكام) in referring to the 'provisions' of a legal text, a legal instrument or an international treaty. We hear of تنفيذ أحكام الاتفاقية / اللائحة that is, implementation of the provisions of an agreement / a Statute / Regulations etc. The old meaning of حكومة (as it occurs in a famous speech by Ali Ibn Abi Taleb) has been transferred to a totally new concept, though with implications rooted in the original sense, namely the Government. Ali Ibn Abi Taleb used the term in the following context « ولقد كنت أمرتكم في هذه الحكومة أمري ، ونخلت لكم مخزون رأيي . . » in addressing his rebellious supporters, with reference to the question of 'arbitration', commonly rendered and known in today's Arabic as التحكيم and the rebellious faction are known as المحكّمة (or الحرورية the *Harouriyah*, that is the people of حروراء / Haroura' a place near Al-Koufah). The original meaning of a different form of the verb تحكّم that is, to be despotic, has since gained another dimension, namely to 'refer to the judgment of God', as the *Khawarij* or the dissenters said 'There can only be one judgment : God's'. Ali's statement may thus be rendered as "I had given you in this *case* an order, and sifted for you my stored opinions" where *case* is the legal term for a modern dispute or a question referred to arbitration. Old Arabic dictionaries equate الحكم with الحكومة but a modern one adds the meaning of government as a modern sense of the term.

It is this modern sense, however, that comes to mind whenever one reads the term حكم or any of its cognates. We today speak of حاكم كندا (the Governor of Canada) and of نظام الحكم (system of government) or النظام الحاكم (regime) of محاولة قلب نظام الحكم (attempting a coup d'etat, or a putsch) or الإطاحة بالحكومة (overthrowing the government) and so on. So established has this sense been in MSA that a well- known verse in

the Quran has been re-interpreted (or misinterpreted) accordingly. The verse is « ... ومن لم يحكم بما أنزل الله » (*The Table*, 44) where يحكم must mean 'judge', whether it refers to 'general discrimination' in general or to passing judgment on certain questions or in certain *cases* in particular. The sense of 'rule' has been given to the word, and الحاكم والمحكوم have come to mean the 'ruler and the ruled', so much so that an uninitiated reader might think Kant's *Critique of Judgement* a book in politics, as it is rendered نقد الحكم in Arabic.

Though implicit in the new meaning given to الحاكم (governor, ruler) even if not immediately recognizable, the original meaning has come to be too specific, as the division of powers in the modern state into the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary has made it necessary to separate the function of the حاكم (the Executive or the government) from that of those who pass judgment in courts of law من يحكمون بين الناس ! There has been, in other words, a diachronic basis for the classification, besides the accepted synchronic one. Ideally, the diachronic level is reserved for the specialists, and advocators of the synchronic approach will argue, as has been mentioned, that we should never bother about old meanings except in historical research; but Arabic is an exception. Confusion will all too often arise when one reads modern writers brought up on the language of the ancients : we tend to interpret نزاهة الحكم as meaning 'honest government' but then it can also mean 'impartial judgment'.

Reading a book by Professor M. Arafah Mahmoud, entitled *The Arabs Before Islam*, Cairo, 1998, I have been struck by the fact that there is a definite duality of style. The writer sometimes writes in the style of the ancients (or copies them without acknowledgement) and

sometimes uses straightforward MSA. Let us have the 'ancient' style first :

لما غزا مـروان القرظ بن زنباع قبـيلة بكر بن وائل وقع فى الأسر ، فطلب من آسره أن يذهب به إلى خماعة بنت عوف بن محلم وكان مروان قد أسدى لها يـداً فيما سلف من دهرها ، فلما ذهبوا به إليـها أجارته من كل مكروه . وكان مروان قد أساء إلى عمرو بن هند ملك العرب وطاغية الحـيرة ، فأقسـم عمـرو على ألا يعـفو عن مروان حتى يضع يـده فى يـده (أى يملكه من نفسه) وكان عمرو إذا ملك فـتك ، فلما علم بمستقره من عوف أرسل إليه ليأتيه به ، فقـال عوف : قد أجارته ابنتى وليس إليه من سبيل إلا العـفو فأجابه عمـرو إلى ما طلب وعفا عن مـروان . وما كان ليعفو عنه بعد أن ظفر به لولا أن أجارته المرأة .

د. محمود عرفة محمود - *العرب*
قبل الإسلام - ص٣٩٢-٣٩٣ .

When Marwan Al-Quraz Ibn Zinba' invaded the tribe of Bakr Ibn Wa'il, he was captured and taken prisoner. He asked his captor to take him to (Lady) Khom'ah bint Awf ibn Muhlim, to whom he had once done a favour; and when he was taken to her she declared that he would be under her protection and that she would shield him from any possible threats. Meanwhile, the Arab King and tyrant of Al-Heerah, Amr Ibn Hind, had once been wronged by Marwan and had taken an oath never to forgive him until Marwan surrendered to him. Amr was known, however, to be in the habit of killing his captives. Learning from Awf about Marwan's whereabouts, he sent word to him asking for Marwan to be handed over. "Well, my daughter has granted him protection", Awf said, "there is nothing you can do

now but to grant him forgiveness". Amr granted his request and forgave Marwan. He would never have forgiven Marwan, now he was so close at hand, had not the woman given him protection.

Not only are the concepts (the ideas of invasion, redemption of captives, and protection) alien to our modern world, but the style itself relies on a set of abstractions that reflect the mode of thinking in that distant past. The concept, for instance, of ملك العرب cannot be rendered as 'king of the Arabs' as the Arabs in pre-Islamic times never had a single kingdom, in the modern sense of the term. Concepts of 'wronging' someone, or the concept of 'injury' or danger or threat مكروه or indeed doing somebody a 'favour' are too vague for present-day readers; and so are the concepts of 'surrender', once given in terms of the traditional (customary) gesture of 'giving somebody one's hand *in submission*', (the explication given by the writer in brackets) and later in the difficult verb يملك (that is, to have power over somebody, hence *to enslave*). An even more difficult concept is that of ظفر به which today means 'had him in his power' : in the text it means 'nearly got him'.

The difficulty of rendering such a text, which can only be diachronically approached, is exacerbated by the use of metaphor, albeit as 'dead' figures of speech. Look at أسدى لها يداً and, rather than say 'in the past', the writer says فيما سلف من دهرها , and finally, the expression which is not yet totally obsolete ليس إليه من سبيل . Though still young, the writer is so immersed in the idiom of the ancient language that he cannot rephrase the anecdote in MSA. He sometimes adopts the modern style, but soon reverts to the old 'mode of thought' when he reports an ancient incident. On the same page we read :

كانت المرأة العربية تتحمل مسئولياتها نحو قومها بالتدخل الإيجابى
فى إطفاء نار الحرب إذا ما استمرت طويلاً وكثر فيها القتلى والجرحى .
فمن ذلك أن الحارث بن عوف المرى - سيد العرب - قال . . .
المرجع نفسه - ص٣٩٣-٣٩٤

Arab women shouldered their responsibilities towards their people by positively intervening to extinguish the fire of war, if too prolonged, and if the casualties were too many. As an illustration, Al-Harith Ibn Awf Al-Morry, the Arab potentate once said ...

Like chieftain, potentate is vague. And just as ملك العرب simply meant *an* Arab king (or leader, or chieftain) so سيد العرب must give a similar meaning. While the idea of 'positive intervention' is certainly modern, like the very concept of 'responsibility', that of being a king or Lord or Master is not. The mixing is confusing, to say the least of it; and the composite style produced requires the translator to be cautious.

A further difficulty which the translator is likely to encounter concerns the conflict of structures : sometimes the writer uses such a 'compact' style, not necessarily elliptical, that interpretation becomes difficult. The word discussed above (يحكم) occurs in our tradition in a famous story pertaining to Calif Omar Ibn Al-Khattab which came to be retold in verse by Hafiz Ibrahim, the twentieth-century poet. When an envoy was sent by the Shah of Persia to Omar, he had expected to find the Calif in a royal palace but, enquiring after him, was told he was having a nap at the door of the mosque. Finding him without guards, the envoy said :

« حكمت فعدلت فأمنت فنمت يا عمر ! »

"You have ruled, been just, felt safe and so slept O Omar !" Is 'rule' the 'right' word here ? The modern version by Hafiz Ibrahim, though containing many more words, by-passes the word altogether, regarding the establishment of justice as adequate, which suggests that the poet took the word to mean to judge rather than rule :

وراع صاحب كسرى أن رأى عمراً　　بين الرعية عُطْلاً وهو راعيها
وعهده بملوك الفرس أن لها　　سوراً من الجند والأحراس يحميها
رآه مستغرقاً فى نومه فرأى　　فيه الجلالة فى أسمى معانيها
فوق الثرى تحت ظل الدوح مشتملاً　　ببردة كاد طول العهد يبليها
فهان فى عينه ما كان يكبره　　من الأكاسر والدنيا بأيديها
وقال قولة حق أصبحت مثلاً　　وأصبح الجيل بعد الجيل يرويها
أمنت لما أقمت العدل بينهمو　　فنمت نوم قرير العين هانيها

> The Shah's emissary was astonished to see Omar shorn [of all regal distinctions] among his subjects, though their lord and master. He had known the Shahs to be always protected by a wall of guards. He saw Omar fast asleep — a perfect expression of real grandeur — on the ground, under a huge shady tree, dressed in an old, nearly threadbare garment. So puny now appeared what he had held as great — the pomp of the Shahs who owned the world. He uttered a word of truth that became proverbial, repeated by one generation after another : 'You feel safe, having established justice among your people, and now sleep with an easy conscience and a happy heart."

We are not, in fact, sure that the Persian envoy did say those words in Arabic; he may have known Arabic, but the fact that Arab history was primarily oral, and would not be recorded until much later makes

us wonder whether the pithy statement was not made up. It is common in reporting such historical incidents to give the 'drift' of the ideas expressed, without sticking to the actual words uttered. The standard biography of the Prophet was not written until nearly two centuries after his death : the author, Ibn Ishaq, produced a huge volume which was lost but whose content was remembered by Al-Bakka'i who, it is said, had learnt it by heart then dictated it to Ibn Hisham who put it down again in writing with additions of his own, much later. The Prophet's sayings themselves maintained their oral form for centuries; and the versions recorded vary therefore considerably. A diachronic approach will often tell the scholar much about the time a Prophetic 'tradition' came to be recorded. People engaged in collecting the tradition from oral sources (المحدّثون) continued to claim to have discovered unrecorded sayings for centuries, though the language now necessarily differed. Thus a famous saying recorded by a reliable collector may appear in different versions in books on Prophetic tradition. At the Quran–teaching school to which I went as a little boy, I was made to memorize the following saying :

> عُذّبت امرأة فى قطة حبستها حتى ماتت جوعاً فدخلت فيها النار ، فلا هى أطعمتها ولا هى تركتها تأكل من خشاش الأرض .

> A woman was tortured because of a cat which she shut up until starved to death, and so she went to hell; she neither fed it nor left it to hunt for food, for rodents and insects.

The version suffers from what I have called 'conflicting styles'. The initial compact sentence has the modern word for cat (قطة) which was not in use during the Prophet's life-time, and was probably introduced in Arabic from late latin *Cattus*, whence the Sudanese *Cadis* (كديس)

(According to Ibn Durayd, quoted in *The Arabic Tongue*, 'it is not an Arabic word'.). The usual word for cat then was *Hirrah* (هرة) said to be onomatopaeic from 'purring'. Another word for it was السِّنَّوْر (al-Sinnawr) again thought to be of foreign origin, possibly Persian (according to later scholars, insofar as it never occurred in Arabic before the ninth century AD). The word حبستها seems also to have a later origin, in this sense, but more important is the taut structure of the opening sentence, with the foregrounding of عُذِّبت (was tortured) leading to the archaic structure دخلت فيها النار where the prepositional phrase once meant 'because of it / on account of it', a sense that survives in Egyptian Arabic but ***not*** in MSA ! The modern Arabic language Academy Dictionary الوسيط gives the following version of the same tradition :

دخلت امرأة النار فى هرة ربطتها ، فلا هى أطعمتها ، ولا هى أرسلتها تأكل من خشاش الأرض .

While *The Arabic Tongue* gives the following version

وفى الحديث أن امرأة ربطت هرة فلم تطعمها ولم **تدعها** تأكل من خشاش الأرض . . . الخ .

Perhaps أرسلتها is the more likely 'version', but who knows ? Stylistic problems add to the difficulty of handling archaic Arabic, especially when the popularization of ancient words and structures forces them on our attention with changed meanings. I have dealt in another book with the evolution of MSA and the development of Naguib Mahfouz's language (*The Comparative Tone*, Cairo, GEBO, 1995). My purpose in this book, as I have said and as this introduction has, I hope, made clear, is to show that archaic Arabic presents special difficulties because it represents a separate, defunct culture, and because it cannot be put

behind us inasmuch as it survives in our religious tradition and informs the tradition of the two modern versions of Arabic, the local varieties and MSA. No amount of modernization could free any brand of the Arabic we use in thinking, in speech and in writing from that old culture. However modern a text may look, there will be 'cultural interferences' from the old language; and a consciousness of those interferences requires a diachronic approach. When dealing with an ancient text, the translator's interpretation will be 'right' to the extent that he or she can adapt his or her standpoint to the old cultural norms; but in dealing with a modern text (in MSA or in any of the local varieties) the interpretation can never be dependent totally on current or contemporary culture, but must always allow for the possibility of such interferences. The concept of 'context' must therefore be widened to subsume *cultural norms* besides linguistic expressions. Hence this book and the various attempts at analysing the translator's dilemmas : the dilemma of interpretation is culture-bound, and the dilemma of expression is equally attributable to culture. And because of the chaotic state of writing in Arabic today, partly due to the changing culture, the translator's dilemmas are not likely to be resolved in the foreseeable future.

Chapter I
TRANSLATION AND CULTURE
(Preliminary notes)

Asked to write an article on the problems of translation of poetry for an international conference, I decided to make the task of my fellow translators easier by making it available in both Arabic and English. I proceeded to write what I thought would be the original text that would subsequently be done into the other language, and naturally I opted for Arabic. The text, covering all the points I wanted to raise, sounded idiomatic enough : it was characterised by the regular, slow rhythm of our ancient language with a tendency to pleonasam, platitudes and plenty of repetitions. When I set about doing it in English the ideas didn't seem to change at all; they were still as fresh and, I thought, interesting. However, what came out was something completely different. I didn't understand what happened at the time and I put it down simply to the change of audience. It was natural, I thought, to write different things for different people : and the question seemed adequately settled. However, with the virtue of hindsight, it can be explained in cultural terms, even though the translation of poetry seems less open to cultural influences than, say, idiom. What puzzled me, primarily, was that the ideas hadn't changed much : they were substantially the same in both versions, with the inevitable variations required by the change of audience, but the 'message' of the new text was different.

This was the start of a serious and maintained consideration of the role of translation in adjusting the "message" of each text, and

consequently of the cultural role played by language and linguistic change (as best exemplified in the translation of literary and other texts). Apart from platitudes which are inevitable in such a context as this, there will be points of interest to the practising translator as well as to the theoretician, that is to say, the academic linguist whose main concern is with theory (the principles and the rules) rather than the actual process of transformation and its cultural significance.

Well, the inevitable platitudes first. A translator is a cultural medium : no translator can hope to evade the cultural implications of his or her translated text : consider the simple rendering of 'can I help you' ? into أى خدمة or تحت أمرك or, in different contexts and with different intonations :

1. عينىّ ؟ 2. خير ؟ 3. فيه حاجة ؟ 4. أنت بتعمل ايه هنا ؟

The translator here is both an *interpreter*, inasmuch as he or she seeks to get the real meaning of the English question, and an *author* of an Arabic situation which makes the choice of the Arabic phrase inevitable. The translator here not only undertakes a linguistic act but, as all students of pragmatics will tell you, a cultural act. And he or she performs at both levels at once, sometimes unconsciously, though he or she has to spend some time over the situation before actually coming to a conclusion about its real meaning. The act of grasping the meaning we often describe as the deciphering of the code or the *decoding*; and he or she uses the equivalent, or what is taken to be the equivalent code which had already been encoded by his or her society and linguistic tradition.

That each code is inextricably embedded in a peculiar culture and indicative of it is a commonplace : no one will quarrel with the

suggestion that Arabic, of each variety, is closely linked up with the Arabic environments everywhere, or that the rhyming slang in English (frog and toad : the road : aunt Nelly; belly; twist and twirl : girl; apples and pears : stairs ... etc.) springs from and indicates a specific culture; but it is the transformation of these and similar 'codes' into others that requires a deeper reflection. Would (هزّ يا وزّ) be equivalent in our slang to 'twist and twirl' ? It would not, because the message will be different, insofar as the Arabic will refer not simply to a girl but to a particular kind of girl, and, apart from the fact that the expression is peculiarly Egyptian and thus belongs to the same variety of language, it will not be available (to use Mackin and McCaig's definition of idiom) to *all* Egyptians. The first commonplace statement has thus led to a problem area connected with *audience*.

The second commonplace will similarly lead to a problem inasmuch as it is connected with the practice of translation everywhere. Even a beginner will tell you that you cannot stick to the structure of the source language when you do it into Arabic or English. It is a rule common to all translation work and will be found in every book on translation. However, while the call for transformation is not peculiar to Arabic, the mechanics of the transformation are. Such mechanics will depend on the variety of Arabic used — archaic, modern standard (MSA) or Egyptian (though Professor Badawi has distinguished 3 varieties of the latter which he calls "levels"). This is problem area number 2, and as such merits a separate discussion inasmuch as it relates to the cultural matrix of each variety or "level".

The difficulty with the third commonplace is that it may not appear to be commonplace at all : indeed, most Arabists would like to think that words are symbols with permanent, fixed meanings; otherwise, they

will argue, how can we hope to understand our long and rich tradition ? The facts, however, point in the other direction : many words which have survived in contemporary Arabic from the archaic variety of our language have undergone a considerable semantic change. A translator who is unaware of this will run the risk of misunderstanding a modern text containing words from the ancient language *whose meaning has changed.* In these cases the dictionary helps but little because even the best will only enumerate the various meanings, while old dictionaries will naturally give you only old meanings. If, on the other hand, the translator is only conversant with the modern meanings of the text he or she is doing into English, some of the words used by the writer in their ancient sense will be baffling.

The problem arising from such a 'commonplace' can prove insuperable for the beginner, as it may lead to serious misunderstandings and cultural distortions. Key words of our time, to use Professor Raymond William's identification of words like 'freedom', 'politics', 'democracy' and the like, suffer the most in this process of semantic change because they are most intimately embedded in the culture of a given society. 'Freedom' (الحرية) meant to the ancient Arabs the opposite of 'slavery' (العبودية) ; and a man or a woman could be either a slave, (whether by birth or if captured in battle) or free. Embedded in our ancient culture are expressions connected with this concept which are impossible to translate — here are a few :

١- العبد يقرع بالعصا / والحر تكفيه الإشارة .

٢- تجوع الحرة ولا تأكل بثدييها .

٣- لا تشتر العبد إلا والعصا معه / إن العبيد لأنجاس مناكيد .

٤- ومن نكد الدنيا على الحر أن يرى / عدواً له ما من صداقته بد .

The first example, a line of verse, means roughly that a free man is intelligent enough to take a hint whilst a slave must take explicit orders even if it means striking him with a stick. The second is proverbial for dignified life and is attributed by one or two authorities to the Prophet. It means roughly that a free woman would rather go hungry than earn her living as a wet nurse. The third and fourth are famous lines by Al-Mutanabbi, the first a strident attack on a ruler of Egypt who would not give him rich rewards for his panegyrics and translates roughly as follows : "When you buy a slave remember to buy a stick as well, for slaves are unclean and abominable". The second says : "It much grieves a free man's heart to have an enemy who must be befriended".

With this background in mind the translator is bound to present the wrong 'message' to the modern European reader whenever he or she refers to freedom. One of the early translators who ventured boldly into this sensitive area of our tradition was Refa'a Al-Tahtawi who would not translate the French '*liberté*' as حرية but rather as إنصاف that is, 'fairness'. He may not have hit the nail on the head but he certainly exhibited adequate consciousness of the problem. The Arabic word did change its meaning and finally came to be equated with freedom; but the old meaning persists, and no translator will be able to escape the original implications when he takes on a line by Hafiz Ibrahim who makes Egypt say :

إننى حرة كسرت قيودى   رغم رقب العدا وقطعت قدى

"I am a free woman ! I have broken my shackles, in spite of the oppression of my enemies, and have torn up my tether".

Or the lines by Ibrahim Nagui :

أعطني حريتي أطلق يديا ‏ ‏ ‏ إنني أعطيت ما استبقيت شيا

آه من قيدك أدمى معصمي ‏ ‏ ‏ لم أبقيه وما أبقى عليا

> "Give me my freedom ! Set my hands free ! I have given all, keeping nothing back ! Your manacles have caused my wrists to bleed; why should I keep them when they have caused me to wilt away ?"

The use is metaphoric, of course, but the choice of 'vehicle' here makes the 'tenor' especially significant, which explains why when Um Kolthoom included the two lines in one of her songs in the mid-1960s the critics and foreign correspondents were quick to observe political undertones in the words and suspected the leading Arab singer of speaking for Egypt that suffered under the yoke of military rule even though the song was professedly a love-poem written years before the military came to power.

This takes us to the next word that has undergone basic semantic change, viz *politics* – and associated words. The modern Arabic equivalent السياسة does not share the Greek root meaning 'city' (*Polis*) or 'social life', but rather refers to controlling or taking care of a flock of sheep or a herd of cattle. The Arabic verb يسوس means to drive the animals this way or that, and the noun السائس refers to the man who does the driving or who cares for his herd. The original meaning survives, incidentally, in contemporary Arabic and is used primarily for the groom at the stables, and the meaning has been transferred to the garage or parking attendant. A politician is therefore a shepherd or herdsman, not openly in a religious sense, though the origin of the association is there and has to be noted. The 'subjects' are called, not

insignificantly, الرعية ; and I may as well refer in passing to الرعاع a word directly derived from it. For the rise of the modern state in Arabia came with the unifying power of Islam and the religious leader was himself a political leader. It was natural to pick a word from the immediate milieu to designate this double function : *As-Siyasah* did very well because it meant something to the immediate audience and had all the implications needed. A *ruler* was the man who established the rules or, as the Arabic word الحاكم suggests, who pronounced judgment on all matters of state. Translating *Politics* into *Siyasah*, Ahmed Lotfy Al-Sayyed was fully aware of the difference and apologized in a footnote for the inaccurate rendering. The fact is that the modern meaning of the Greek-derived word has been given totally to its recent Arabic equivalent while the *practice of politics* in the Arab world remains entirely bound up with the ancient word. And this applies too to words like *Ameer* (Amir) which does not translate acurately as 'Prince' but rather as *Commander* (consider أمير الجيوش بدر الجمالي) from the Arabic *Amr* (to command); and عاهل a variant of عائل (supporter), often substituted for *monarch*, and, of course, *king* which has given us ملك , rather inaccurately insofar as *Malik* is the same as *Maalik* – owner, proprietor, lord.

(ii)

I have chosen some of the more obvious, because painful, examples of semantic change. A translator doesn't 'take thought' today before using these and similar words which have changed with the cultural transformations in the Arab world, but rather accepts the political jargon and aims at the conformity of the terminology used. The cultural matrix of most words survives, however, in what we often refer to as the tradition, that is, the literary legacy of the Arabs. Most

metaphors used in love-poetry use the common symbols of the Arabian desert – primarily thirst – which have lost their original meaning and now simply refer to love and associated emotions. Al-Tha'alibi lists in *Fiqh Al-Lugha* (Understanding [our] Language, commonly equated with 'philology'), words now used to indicate 'longing' or 'passionate desire' as 'degrees' of what he terms the 'need for water' — which he rightly assumes to be a gradable quality but arbitrarily specifies a term for each 'degree'. They include الهيام and الجوى – two words which seem to have lost their original implication of thirst. Compare the following lines which use الجوى both in the original and metaphoric senses :

وأشـد ما لُقّيت من ألم الجـوى   قـرب الحبيب وما إليـه وصـول
كالعيس فى البيداء يقتلها الظما   والمـاء فـوق ظهـورها محمـول

The greatest pain of longing (thirst) I have suffered
Is for the beloved to be so close but unattainable,
Like camels in the desert, nearly dying of thirst
Even while carrying water on their backs.

and

اسقنى واشـرب على أطلاله   وارو عنى طـالما الدمع روى
كيف ذاك الحب أمسى خبراً   وحـديثاً من أحاديث الجوى

O let me drink, and join me in drinking
To the memory (the ruins) of my love,
And report (to the world) for as long as my tears flow,
(To report / to quench my thirst ?)
How that love of mine is reduced to a "report"
A (mere) story of love (of thirst ?)

The word-play in يروى may not be intended, but even the most ardent objectors to Ricks' inclusion of 'pun' in the qualities of the grand style (cf. C. Ricks, *Milton's Grand Style*) will be hard put to it to deny its existence or that it does 'enhance the suggestiveness' of the lines. Any translation of the line may sound too long, too tentative; but what can we do when faced with such semantic change wherein the original sense is loth to disappear ? (more of this in a later chapter).

Other examples of semantic change are less problematic. *Qonbulah* قنبلة today does mean a bomb, and, though we know, or can guess, how it came to mean that (at the turn of the 19th century Al-Jabarti used قنبرة *Qunburah*-plural : *Qonbor* قنبر in referring to bombs) the fact remains that the present word did mean something different to our forefathers – a group of horses or camels ! *Radhah* ردهة meant a mountain summit, not a hall; *Ghaniyah* غانية a beautiful woman, not a woman of easy virtue; *Qa'eedah* قعيدة a woman, simply, not a cripple; *Kharqa* خرقاء simply a girl unskilled in household chores, not a simpleton; *Far'* فرع hair, hence فرعاء – with long hair; and *Ahbal* أهبل he who lost his father or mother, hence the loss of the mind and, through metathesis, *Ablah* أبله to cite only a handful. But consider the following line of verse in which a poet noted for his 'simple' language describes a kiss :

ولثمــت فاهــا ممســكاً بقرونــها   شُرب النزيف ببرد ماء الحشرج

> I kissed her mouth, holding her locks on both sides of her head, and drank deeply as a *thirsty* man drinks from the cool water of a (mountain pellucid) *pond*

I have dwelt on this 'commonplace' perhaps for too long, because, as I have suggested, many Arabists will question the validity of my

argument; and because of its connection with my last point which is not, decidedly, a commonplace, – namely, that the main area of cultural encounter is idiom.

(iii)

At the outset one is met with the difficulty of establishing what constitutes idiom. We often say that this is an idiomatic expression when it is common enough or available to the native speaker, regardless of its illogical or ungrammatical structure. Categories of idiom are not mutually exclusive but can be established all the same both according to intrinsic features and to function. The common phrase, fixed or unfixed, can be regarded as idiomatic if typical, as I said, of the native speaker : for *Good Morning* صباح الخير is idiomatic; for *Good Afternoon* عصر الخير or the even more ridiculous بعد ظهر الخير is not; for *Good Evening* there is مساء الخير , but for *Good Night* there is only تصبح على خير – which breaks the noun and genetive pattern that could not, as we have seen, stand the test of analogy. This first category is entirely *culturally biased* : 'How are you ?', becomes إزيك in Egypt and Sudan (literally what are you like ?) إيش لونك in the Gulf (literally what is your colour ?) and كيفك elsewhere. Sometimes idioms in Arabic and English are deceptively similar, sometimes genuinely so : the Egyptian عامل إيه is closer to *How are you doing* ? than to *How do you do* ? which is almost the exact equivalent of the Egyptian أهلاً وسهلاً , or the Arabian مرحباً , or otherwise the neutral تشرفنا .

A pragmatic approach to this category of idiom is inevitable, for it is the cultural 'occasion' rather than the meaning of the idiom that we are handling, that it to say, the function, not the semantic aspect, of the idiom (more on functional translation in the next chapter). Dictionaries

will be of little help here, as the translator will need to re-create each 'occasion' and supply the appropriate idiom.

An Englishman's "Brother !" or "I'll never" or "of all things" can get any number of equivalents from – « مش ممكن ! » – « يا نهار ! » « يا خبر ! » to « شوف إزاى » and « معقولة دى » ... etc. An occasional identity of functional and semantic aspects should not delude us into attempting further identities – So, 'I needed that' seems to fit almost precisely (in both aspects) أدى إللى كان ناقص – but that is only one instance; and only a limited number of idioms here and there will be happily matched in both aspects, such as 'God forbid' (لا قدر الله !), 'who says ?' (مين قال ؟) "Thingummy's gone" (البتاع ضاع) "What's his name's here" (اسمه أيه وصل) but others will have pragmatic equivalents only : "What next ?" (عيب كده ؟) or (ولسه !) — "perish the thought !" (فَشَرْ) or (حد الله !) or (لا يمكن أبداً) ... etc.

To accept a pragmatic approach to the first type of idiom is to accept the culture-based approach. Categories which are easy to correlate in both languages include the religion-based idiom (God willing إن شاء الله) and those expressions rooted in basic human activity (like basic vocabulary) – examples with the root 'take' :

– he took a decision	أخذ قرار
– he took to her	أخذ عليها (ولّف عليها)
– he took a kiss	أخذ بوسة
– he took no notice	ما خدش باله
– he took precautions	خد احتياطات
– he took a step	أخذ خطوة

Other categories have not been studied and therefore require further inquiry.

The second type of idiom is what Mackin and McCaig designate 'pure idiom', that is, a number of words whose total meaning is ***not*** equivalent to the sum total of the individual meanings of the words. 'To blow the gaff' is the perfect example (يفشى السر) where neither the blowing nor the gaff can suggest divulging a secret. The problem with this type is that Arabists will never admit to having anything like it in our language. I claim the contrary. In fact I have more examples of this type in Arabic than most compilers of dictionaries of English idioms have produced. The trouble is, of course, that Arabic lexicographers have persistently tried to find a logical explanation for each as though it would be a blemish on the language of the Arabs to be occasionally illogical. Al-Zamakhshari in his *Asaas El-Balaghah* offers forced readings of some of the common idioms in Classical Arabic with sad results : استأصل شأفتهم (literally 'removed their scab') means to wipe them out; أفرخ روعه (literally 'his fear's eggs have hatched') means that his fear has gone ... etc. In each case Al-Zamakhshari finds an indefensible explanation as he assumes that any fixed phrase must be metaphoric. In Egyptian Arabic we have plenty; فى عقل بالى simply means 'I thought' or 'in my mind', though the literal meaning (in the mind of my mind) sounds silly, as Professor Said Badawi has remarked. Other examples include يفهمها وهى طايرة (literally : he understands it while it flies) which means 'he can take a hint' (or he's extremely perceptive); يوريها العين الحمرا (literally : he shows her the red eye) which means 'he terrorizes her' or 'he makes her afraid of him'; and, to conclude this section, فاكرنى كروديا which means 'he thinks I am a fool'. I have failed to trace the origin of this word; explanations which relate it to يستكرد which is morphologically related to Kurds, the ethnic minority in Northern Iraq, whose plight the Gulf war has served to

publicize, are uncertain and even untenable. Borderline idioms, such as رقبتى سدّادة can be explained in the light of metaphoric idioms (in the case of أسدّ برقبتى – literally : I can do the job satisfactorily even if it costs me my neck, that is, I shall show devotion in the performance) – and metaphoric idioms are no less related to both English and Arabic cultures.

The fact is that Arabic, perhaps because it is such an ancient language, never seems to lose the original literal sense of words and expressions that have come to be metaphoric. In other words, the category of 'dead metaphor' which exists in Arabic no less than in other languages is not recognized widely enough in Arabic scholarship; in fact many Arabists will deny its existence, insisting that no figure of speech is truly dead, and that metaphoric idioms (which are one section of dead tropes) do not exist. Usage says otherwise. Nobody thinks of the literal meaning of expressions like نضب معينه (that is, his resources are exhausted; literally : his water has dried up);

١- عاد بخفى حنين / ٢- صفر اليدين / ٣- خاوى الوفاض .

all meaning practically the same thing, that is 'he returned empty handed'; though the first must have had a story in our tradition on which it was based, (literally : he came back with Hunayn's slippers) now definitely forgotten. Some Arabist or other will no doubt come up with stories involving the mysterious Hunayn and his slippers like those recorded in مجمع الأمثال by al-Maydani; the second means literally 'empty-handed', while the third refers instead to an 'empty sack'. Now consider the following three expressions with approximately the same meaning :

١- لا يُجارى ٢- لا يُبارى ٣- لا يُضارع

viz. unmatched or unparalleled. The first literally means 'cannot be beaten in a running contest' (or 'cannot be kept abreast of'), the second 'cannot be beaten at any match', the third 'cannot be equalled'. I do not believe anyone today uses any of these expressions with the thought of 'running' or a 'sports contest' or 'equality' even troubling him. They are metaphoric idioms deep-rooted in our culture, which simply transmit a meaning. There are less common expressions which are equally dead figures and as such are metaphoric idioms but which can come alive if the reader is totally unacquainted with them. An expression conveying nearly the same meaning but which belongs to the latter category is لا يشق غباره – which literally means 'no horse can run fast enough to get through the cloud of dust raised by the horse he's riding !'. The average Arabic reader may require an explanation before he could visualize the scene; in the absence of an explanation he will pick the idiom and use it for the general meaning which will seem, however, to be more elegantly expressed in this idiom. Will the simple 'you can't beat him' do ? or does it have to be 'peerless' ? Would the Biblical 'unapproachable' be acceptable ?

The translator is invariably at a loss how to do the metaphoric idioms into English : English ones, equally rooted in Western culture, will present little difficulty : all the translator normally does is see if the metaphor would be acceptable to the 'Arabic-trained' ear. If it is, then the equivalent will be provided; if not, only the abstract meaning. Consider the following English idioms *that have come to be* acceptable in certain Arabic contexts :

1. to twist one's arm — يلوى ذراعه
2. to flex his muscles — يستعرض عضلاته

3. there are more doves than hawks عدد الحمائم أكبر من عدد الصقور
4. to get an idea of يأخذ فكرة عن ......
5. to lend a deaf ear يعير أذنا صماء
6. to turn his back on يدير ظهره لـ ...

But consider the following which are not acceptable and must be reduced to the general meaning – through interpretation :

1. to put his foot down يصر على رأيه
2. to stick to his guns يثبت فى موقفه
3. to blow his own trumpet يتفاخر
4. a flash in the pan برق كاذب / بداية خادعة
5. he has a bee in his bonnet about مهووس بكذا ...
6. he has bats in the belfry مشعور / مهفوف

Having given these examples I shall make my point by giving the Arabic examples first before considering their difficulties, especially as some of them *can* be regarded as pure idioms :

١- حكى لى الحكاية من طقطق لـسلامو عليكو .

1. He told me the story from A to Z.

٢- دورت عليه فى سلقط فى ملقط مالقيتهوش .

2. I looked everywhere but couldn't find it.

٣- يكسب كتير لكن .. خدى يا سدره ودى يا مدره .

3. He does make a lot of money, but squanders it all.

٤- رجعت لقيت البيت يضرب يقلب .

4. When I arrived back home, the house was a mess.

٥- وعدنى يجيب الكتاب وأدى وش الضيف .

5. He promised to get me the book but never came back.

٦- عايزنى أضرب الأرض أطلع بطيخ .

6. He wants me to do it on the spot – which is impossible.

The first difficulty concerns the view that regardless of whether a metaphoric idiom is 'live' or not, it should be treated as a metaphor, that is to say, it should be translated as it is, so as to give the reader a taste of the original '*culture*' (according to 'resistent', as opposed to 'fluent', translation). This view has been supported in practice by many journalists who transferred English expressions to Arabic. Mohamed Hassanain Haykal, the far-famed former editor of Al-Ahram, is responsible for using, for the first time in Arabic, expressions like 'A lot of water flowed under the bridge' وتدفقت مياه كثيرة تحت الجسر – 'he gave him the green light' أعطاه الضوء الأخضر – both obviously metonyms with the status of 'dead figure' in English but which came alive, very much alive, in Arabic. The second in particular is getting so popular that it is already losing its 'live' character, while the first persists as a metaphor. Other instances are doubtful – 'we are in the same boat', once scoffed at when done literally, is gaining popularity as ونحن فى نفس القارب ; while a common English idiom 'don't let the grass grow' was misunderstood in a popular translation of an Agatha Christie into ولا تدع الكلأ ينمو which is, of course, wrong, as the rest of the idiom is 'under your feet', meaning 'waste no time', and the general meaning should have been instead, لا تضع وقتا . This and similar mistakes are being made all the time, actually, though this alone cannot be a reason for rejecting this view out of hand. Indeed, there is something to be said for the transmission of idiom to and from foreign cultures. In Arabic, it has given us the common لديه الورقة الرابحة – 'he holds a trump card' and other expressions from gambling.

The other view is that idioms should not be translated but that equivalent idioms in the target language should be found so that the text may sound idiomatic ('fluent'). This is more suited, in fact, to literary texts, for here the reader likes to have the familiar expressions of his language and the familiar air created by such expressions. Thus طلع نابه على شونة – a pure idiom — must be rendered as 'he made the effort in vain'; كان ينسج على هذا المنوال as 'he followed the same pattern' (literally : he was weaving on the same loom'); مسح بيه البلاط 'he gave him a dressing down' (literally : he wiped the floor tiles with him); ما فيهوش سريخ ابن يومين 'totally deserted' (literally : there wasn't even a two-day old infant; or the Shakespearean 'not a mouse stirring'); ويكفر سيئاته 'to give him a hard time' (literally; to enable him to expiate 'his sins'); or, finally, يطيّن عيشته or يطلع دينه meaning approximately the same thing, that is 'to give him hell'); though the first means literally to 'throw his life in mud', the second 'to make him renounce his religion'.

It is obvious that this category reflects the cultural matrix of the language more than 'pure idiom'. Like proverbs and proverbial sayings, most of the metaphor-based idioms are compact expressions of ideas or situations. And Arabic, more than English, resorts to proverbs at a certain level almost characteristically – as Professor Badawi has convincingly shown. The proverb-category is, by definition, untranslatable. Many proverbs have, of course, their near – but never exact – equivalents; and a fortunate translator will only rarely encounter these and may substitute the equivalent at the risk of a sacrifice : 'One man's meat is another man's poison' (مصائب قوم عند قوم فوائد) 'The early bird gets the worm' (الرزق يحب الخفية) – 'Once bitten twice shy' (اللى تلسعه الشوربة ينفخ ع الزبادى) – 'he can't see the wood for the trees'

تكاثرت الظباء على خراشٍ ، فما يدرى خراشٌ ما يصيد and so on. The last is, in particular, hardly an equivalent; but the suggestion of being 'at sea', at a loss, for not being able to see the general picture because of focusing too much on details, may be suggested by the bewilderment of the legendary Khirash who cannot shoot a single hart because the deer about him are too many !

A degree of cultural transformation is in fact necessary. There is no better example of this than the equation of the expression 'it warms the cockles of any heart' with إنه يثلج صدرى (literally; it cools my heart) or « لقد قرت عينى به » (it has cooled off my eye) !

The last category of idiom, namely 'collocation', is peculiar to each language, and there can be no way of establishing any cultural dimensions for it. Perhaps we can do that with word combinations in different contexts, or with word-compounds, but that requires further inquiry. To accept the specificity of each language, however, insofar as each is deeply embedded in its peculiar culture, is perforce to confront the problem of cultural adaptations : the need for continual adjustments in our *interpretation* in the light of the cultural family to which an Arabic text belongs (whether archaic or modern, as explained in the 'introduction') and the need to allow for variations in putting such interpretation into words (in the target language). This will be dealt with at length in the next chapter.

Chapter II

"FAMILY RESEMBLANCES" REVISITED

(i)

Acculturation : How foreign is 'foreign' ?

Translation is flourishing : not a day passes by without a new book being translated from English into Arabic and new translation *problems* raised. The fact is that with every new text in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), the language invariably used in translation, new modes of ***thought*** are presented which may challenge the idiomatic modes that the Arabic reader is brought up on, and so may disrupt any potential positive response on his or her part. I have underscored the word ***thought*** to draw attention to the fact that a translator's work is concerned with ideas as transmitted in linguistic structures. Expressions such as 'in the final analysis', 'when all is said and done', 'to all intents and purposes', 'for better or for worse', etc. may not be difficult to translate; and a gifted translator may find an idiomatic 'substitute' that will sound genuinely Arabic, but the ideas will always remain foreign. No matter how clever the translator is, there will remain a discrepancy between the original English and the Arabic version — simply because in Arabic we do not use these idioms in thinking or, consequently, in writing. Some professional translators will, of course, say (في التحليل الأخير) but many will opt for (أخيراً) or (فى آخر المطاف) or, better still, (آخر الأمر) or, indeed, (والمحصلة هى). 'Plausible enough', you'll say, but consider :

To regard all investments in the tourist industry as money ill-spent simply because the bureaucratic machinery set up by the minister swallows up such rare resources as the state is willing to contribute to the reactivation of this vital sector is to admit, in the last analysis, the government's inability to deal with the power of its own red tape which seems to have an even tighter stranglehold on the entire civil service, or to suggest that the government as government is doomed to impotence and that even basic infrastructural activities, by definition a state responsibility, should be left to the private sector.

None of the suggested translations for 'in the last analysis' will do : the idiom here is close enough to 'in effect' or 'virtually' فعلياً / فى الواقع .

But this is only one problem, and the professional translator, coming across this run-on sentence in a British newspaper, will naturally understand that the 'minister' refers to a 'junior' minister, not a cabinet minister, that is, a post close enough to what we call an under-secretary (وكيل وزارة) in Egypt. The translator may choose to give the cultural equivalent, so as to distinguish between a Secretary who is a 'political officer' الوزير الذى يشغل منصباً سياسياً and a junior minister who is a civil servant موظف حكومى . A beginner is expected to make mistakes here because of cultural disparities which will account for the *foreign* ideas; but this is easily remedied in translation training. What is less easy to handle is the air of foreignness which is due to the *mode of thought* accounting for the *mode of expression.*

Now what is so *foreign* about the mode of thought here ? Obviously, as the linguists will tell you, the long *subject* built up of an

infinitive, 'to regard', followed by a series of qualifiers. In Arabic we prefer the subject to be short and crisp : a noun, not loaded with qualifications (modifiers of all sorts) and direct enough to get the message across immediately. Next, the linguists will insist, there is the structure of the sentence which drags on for too long in a concatenation of coordinated phrases and clauses. This is, however, not so *foreign* to MSA, and we are more at home with coordination than with subordination in MSA. One foreign feature here is the play on the peculiarly British 'red tape' الروتين so as to invoke its original literal meaning in creating a vivid metaphor, instead of using it as a dead figure of speech. Other ideas which must sound foreign, however clever the translator is, include : (1) Money 'ill-spent' — a play on money 'well-spent', or 'time well spent', in the sense of إهدار المال that is, 'money going down the drain', or 'uselessly spent'. Then there is (2) 'simply because', that is, 'only because', 'for the sole reason that', which translates as لا لسبب إلاّ (not ببساطة). The idea is in fact so peculiar to English that a person used to employing it in his or her thinking will be forced to abandon it altogether when switching to thinking in Arabic. A common context is :

A. Why did he get into such a huff ?
B. Oh, there was no reason really ! He simply loves it !

أ - وما الذى جعله يفقد أعصابه على هذا النحو ؟
ب - لم يكن ثمة ما يدعوه للغضب حقاً ! لكنه يحب الغضب وحسب !
(إيه اللى خلاه يتنرفز النرفزة دى كلها ؟ لا أبداً ما فيش ! أصله غاوى يتنرفز وخلاص !)*

* All translations are by the author, unless otherwise stated.

Now a comparison with other contexts involving 'simply' will prove that it is foreign : 'Poor boy ! He simply cannot understand' / 'She simply adores him' / 'He simply left the meeting with no further ado' etc. Examples may be multiplied ***ad infinitum***, and in each case the quickest possible solution will be to ***OMIT*** the ***foreign*** idea :

الحكاية إن المسكين موش قادر يفهم / بتعبده عباده /
صاحبنا ساب الاجتماع من غير أى تعليق / دوشة -

All of which can lose the real 'tone' of the original if done into 'archaic' Arabic but are truthful to the tone in Egyptian Arabic (EA) and in the version of MSA echosing EA. But ***OMISSION*** is hardly a solution. For other problems the translator is forced to find equivalents : for the 'bureaucratic machinery', he or she may opt for الجهاز الحكومى / or البيروقراطى or even الدواوين الحكومية/ الادارية/ البيروقراطية — and will find an easy solution for the dead figure of speech 'swallows up' (يبتلع/ يستنزف / يستهلك etc) but will have to 'take thought' (hesitate) before rendering 'rare' as نادر !

The translator here confronts a different kind of foreign idea : an idiom based on an economic concept which is NEW in Arabic, but essential to the meaning of the sentence. Even as a specialized concept, 'rare' in this sense is 'rarely' used in Arabic. Coupled with 'resources', for which موارد is generally accepted as an Arabic equivalent, the term will be understood to mean 'limited' and 'hard to come by', that is, not readily available. Intuition may come to the rescue and the translator may do the sentence thus :

إن الجهاز الإدارى يستهلك معظم الموارد التى تبدى الدولة استعدادها لتقديمها ، على ضآلة هذه الموارد وقلتها (ندرتها ؟)

A foreign concept in inception and development, 'resources' has been 'naturalized' in Arabic and most readers will accept the implication that it refers both to money (cash or goods) and services (as well as to human resources, that is, manpower, in other contexts). 'Naturalization', to maintain the central metaphor, is not only normal for 'loan words' but also of vital importance in linguistic development. Indeed, the vitality of a language is often gauged by its ability to absorb fully, through naturalization, every foreign concept believed to be important enough for its development; and, in most cases, Arabic prefers to have such foreign concepts carried by genuinely formed Arabic words. So many concepts have in effect been naturalized that MSA has come to differ almost basically at the semantic level from archaic Arabic. A check-list of such words as carry 'naturalized' concepts in the above passage will include :

investment	استثمار
tourist industry	السياحة / صناعة السياحة
machinery	جهاز
resources	موارد
The State	الدولة
contribute	يعطى / يقدم / يشارك / يساهم
reactivation	إحياء / بعث / تنشيط
vital sector	قطاع حيوى
The government	الحكومة
to deal with	يتصدى لـ / يتعامل مع / يقمع
red tape	روتين / بيروقراطية
to have a stranglehold	يطبق على أنفاس / يخنق / يمسك بتلابيب / يجثم على صدر

civil service	إدارات الدولة / المصالح الحكومية
infrastructure	البنية الأساسية / التحتية / المرافق الأساسية
responsibility	مسؤولية
the private sector	القطاع الخاص

A professional translator will never hesitate to use any of these terms because they involve concepts that have been finally 'naturalized'; but he or she will and must pause to consider how to render the foreign constructions referred to above and which include other expressions *impossible to naturalize because they belong to modes of expression inherent in the modes of thought of foreign languages* – more examples :

* to deal with the power of *its own* red tape
* to have *an even tighter* stranglehold
* the government *as government*
* *by definition* a state responsibility

Clever translators will, I am sure, come up with 'solutions' to the problem of 'foreignness', such as those provided *infra*, but the point I am making stands : certain modes of expression are inevitably sacrificed in a 'fluent' translated text so as to avert the alienation of the target language reader. Now to two Arabic versions of the above English sentence, the first a 'professional' translation, the second a re-writing in fluent Arabic of the 'same' ideas :

١ – إذا اعتبرنا جميع الاستثمارات فى صناعة السياحة أموالاً مهدرة ، لا لسبب إلا لأن الجهاز البيروقراطى الذى أنشأه الوزير يستهلك جميع الموارد التى تبدى الدولة استعدادها لانفاقها على تنشيط هذا القطاع الحيوى ، فسوف نكون قد اعترفنا فى الواقع بأن الحكومة عاجزة عن التصدى لقوة الروتين الحكومى ، وهو الذى يطبق

على أنفاس الجهاز الادارى للدولة كله حتى ليكاد يخنقـه ، فيما يبدو ، أو الايحاء بأن الحكومة باعـتبارهـا السلطة الحاكمـة قد كتب عليـها العـجز ، أو بأن الأنشطة الأساسية الخاصة بانشـاء المرافق ، وهى - تعريفاً - من مسؤوليات الدولة ، يجب أن توكل إلى القطاع الخاص .

٢ - يتصور الـبعض أن جميع ما تـستثمره الدولة فى صـناعة السياحة مـن أموال ضائعٌ مهدر ، لأنه ينفق على الجهاز الإدارى البيروقراطى الذى أنشأه الوزير ، وهى أموال تحصل عليـها الدولة بشق النفس ولا تبخـل بها على تنشيط هذا القطاع الحـيوى ، ولكن القول بذلك معناه الإقرار بعجز الحكومة عن التصدى لسلطة الجهاز الإدارى ، وهـو الذى تضـخم فأصـبح يجثم علـى صدر المصـالح الحكوميـة حتى كـاد يكتم أنفاسها ، أو معناه الايحاء بأن الحكومة كتب عليها أن تعجز عن ممارسة سلطاتها ، أو بأن عليها أن تفوض القطاع الخاص فى انشاء مرافق البنية الأساسية ، وهى مهمة من صميم عمل الدولة .

The differences are all too obvious . a calculated measure of interpretation has secured fluency for the second version : verbosity has been curtailed, and most alien *modes* have been cut out. But all the 'naturalized' concepts are there, and the ideas are given intact in the re-written version. Can we still call it, then, a *translation* ? How similar are the two Arabic texts ? Has interpretation produced a 'related' text, even as a new 'family member' ? How does culture contribute to the sense of classical similitude-in- dissimilitude that is only too obvious ? Can we hope, in this way, to achieve 'acculturation' for MSA ?

(ii)
Interpretation, rain or shine

To contrast translation with interpretation in dealing with non-literary texts is to raise a linguistic-semantic issue with certain unexpected cultural dimensions. The fact that there *are* linguistic

transformations capable of securing fluency for a given translated text *through interpretation* could indicate some invisible links between structure (hitherto believed to be universal) and thought (admittedly culture-specific). Translation studies undertaken *on Arabic* have for long suffered from the application of linguistic theories developed primarily for European languages which are, by and large, modern and mostly born out of the scientific spirit of seventeenth-century Europe. Applied to a living language, such as Egyptian Arabic, and within the severely restricted scope of old (pre-1995) Chomskian thinking, such theories appear plausible enough : the *examples* are limited to those in the textbooks, and the application of the theories restricted to 'situations' which foreign scholars have exhaustively handled. Any semantic-diachronic approach is carefully avoided because of the quicksand areas that are likely to disturb the passage of the student of Arabic translation : with MSA problems of equivalence already too difficult, problems involving equivalence with the archaic variety of Arabic are certain to prove insuperable. It has been argued in the first part of this essay that interpretation, as a substitute for 'professional' translation, could help the translator arrive at a reasonably fluent version in the target language (TL) by skirting the untranslatable structures, getting round them, or finding substitutes which, regardless of precise equivalence, should be closer to the spirit of the TL, and more likely to win the reader's approval. More difficult than the untranslatable structures, however, are those which appear translatable because of specious equivalences : relatively 'equivalent' contexts might suggest semantic equivalence and so tempt the translator to establish structural equivalence (though such contexts may still be quicksandish, if not

sometimes quagmirish). The expression quoted above, 'for better or for worse' will be associated in the learner's mind with the marriage 'vow': the translator will be familiar with the context of the *Book of Common Prayer* which requires the wife-to-be to say to the bridegroom : 'I take thee to my wedded husband, to have and hold from this day forward, ***for better for worse***, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health'. The meaning will, of course, be close enough to 'in good or bad fortune', and the translator will immediately think of (في الحلوة والمُرَّة) especially as a famous Egyptian lyric is readily available :

عالحلوة والمرة　　مش كنا متعاهدين
ليه تنسى بالمرة　　عشرة بقى لها سنين

Did we not vow to live together,
For better or for worse ?
Why then forget altogether
The life we shared for years ?

At the back of the learner's mind will be the formal 'in weal and woe', and the Arabic, equally formal – if only because Quranic – (في السراء والضراء) which has the modern British equivalent 'in fair weather and / or foul' which has been shortened to 'fair or foul'. The common example is 'It's not everybody that would stick by a man through ***fair and foul*** as you have'. The translator may also remember other Britishisms such as *'come rain, come shine'* and *'wet or fine'*, and the meaning is, in all cases, 'in favourable or adverse circumstances'. The learner will no doubt note the British obsession with the weather, and could independently learn that a *fairweather* friend is 'one who will desert you should trouble or difficulties arise'.

Resigned to the impossibility of finding a cultural equivalent for the British weather idiom, the translator will be quite happy to give the general meaning. This may be given in a culture-specific Arabic metaphor, such as (فى الحلوة والمُرَّة) that is, 'whether the times are sweet or sour' but, this being in Egyptian Arabic, the translator may prefer the archaic(فى السراء والضراء). The difficulty is compounded here by the fact that 'rain' in Arabic could carry the opposite significance of rain in English. It may be enough to refer to one important word for rain in Arabic, namely الغيث which literally means 'relief' or 'succour'. To people in the desert rain is indeed quite welcome, and the Quran refers to the water coming down from heaven to *revive the dead land* as a sign of God's power : indeed, the words for rain, other than *water*, used in the Quran are either الغيث (life-giving rains) or مطر which is used *only once* to refer to rain in general but *seven times* to refer to destructive rain or, metaphorically, to the 'stones rained down from heaven in punishment'*. When the famous speech by Portia was done

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* « وامطرنا عليهم مطراً فانظر كيف كان عاقبة المجرمين » (الأعراف - ٨٤) .

« وأمطرنا عليها حجارة من سجيل منضود » (هود - ٨٢) .

« وامطرنا عليهم حجارة من سجيل » (الحجر - ٧٤) .

« وأمطرنا عليهم مطراً فساء مطر المنذرين » (الشعراء - ١٧٣ ، النمل - ٥٨) .

« فأمطر علينا حجارة من السماء » (الأنفال - ٣٢) .

« ولقد أتوا على القرية التى أمطرت مطر السوء » (الفرقان - ٤٠) .

The only verse containing the general meaning occurs in surat *Al-Ahqaf*, verse 24, namely.

« فلما رأوه عارضاً مستقبل أوديتهم قالوا هذا عارض ممطرنا » .

which is the only one cited in the Arabic Language Academy (ALA) Dictionary الوسيط as proof of the meaning of the word in a good sense; other senses are given as 'figurative', with one verse to support each. The ALA dictionary, as will be explained, tries to establish a root meaning for the verb مَطَرَ which is : to go quickly or 'to come down' heavily.

into Arabic, it was perhaps natural that the 'relief' sense should be opted for :

> The quality of Mercy is not strained
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath :

ليس فى الرحمة إلزام (وقهر)
إنها كالغيث ينهلُّ على الأرض رقيقاً
من سماه (دونما نهى وأمر)

The reference is to the Quranic غيث and the verb يُغاث in the following verses :

١- « وهو الذى ينزل **الغيث** من بعد ما قنطوا وينشر رحمته » (الشورى - ٢٨) .
٢- « كَمَثَلِ غيثٍ أعجب الكفارَ نباتُه » (الحديد - ٢٠)
٣- « ثم يأتى من بعد ذلك عام فيه يُغَاثُ الناس وفيه يعصرون » (يوسف - ٤٩)

No wonder Quranic translators have been at a loss how to handle the word; Arberry has no doubts :

> 1. And it is He who sends down the *rain*
> After they have despaired
> And He unfolds His mercy;

And Yusuf Ali concurs, even if tending to interpretation :

> 1. He is the One that sends down
> *Rain* (even) after (men) have
> Given up all hope
> And scatters His mercy
> (Far and wide)

It is Pickthall who is positively interpretative :

1. And He it is who sendeth down the *saving rain*
After they have despaired, and spreads out his mercy.

With the second verse, the translators are more certain :

2. As the likeness of vegetation after *rain*
Whereof the growth is pleasing to the husbandman
(Pickthall)

2. It is as *rain* whose vegetation
Pleases the unbelievers
(Arberry)

2. How *rain* and the growth it brings forth
Delight (the hearts of) the tillers
(Yusuf Ali)

I have not relegated these examples to the footnotes because they are essential to my argument : translators of the Quran are learned scholars of the very first order, but the concept of غيث as so intimately related to غوث has continued to baffle them. The verb يُغاث is simply a cognate of the noun used for rain, and it is the Arabic-speaking Yusuf Ali, so well versed in the tradition of our language, that will interpret the verb correctly. He knows full well that the reference is to rain, but he also knows that it is the rain falling somewhere on an African plateau that causes the flooding of the Nile. He boldly attempts an interpretation of his own that allows for both the heavy rains and the Nile flood :

3. Then will come after that (period) a year
In which the people will have *abundant water*
And in which they will press (wine and oil)

Pickthall gives us the *results* of the *abundant water* :

> 3. Then after that will come a year
> When the people will have *plenteous crops*
> And when they will press (wine and oil)

But Arberry plays safe :

> 3. Then thereafter there shall come a year
> Wherein the people *will be succoured*
> and press in season

All very plausible, you'll agree, but the point is that 'rain' as indicative of 'foul weather' will never do in translating 'fair weather or foul' ! A present-day translator is likely to be conversant with the Shakespearean 'Fair is foul and foul is fair' and, possibly too, with the established Arabic rendering (نرى الخير شراً نرى الشر خيراً) which strikes the keynote of the whole play of *Macbeth*. And it is to these two key words that I must now turn in my attempt to explain the difficulty of establishing a stable interpretation of 'for better or for worse'.

The idea of good and bad, or, to give the right idiom 'for good or ill', does *not* concern 'good and evil' conceived of in terms of الخير والشر but rather in terms of 'whatever the result' مهما تكن النتيجة and here are examples from contemporary British English :

(1) Mrs Elliot : So things didn't work out then ?
Ruth : No – I've just walked out on him *for better or for worse*

John Osborne & Anthony Creighton, *Epitaph for George Dillon*, Penguin 1960 (Faber & Faber 1958).

السـيدة إليوت : إذن لم ينجح الزواج ؟
روث (راعوث) : لا - لقـد هجرت لتوى منزل الزوجـية ، **مهما تكن النتائج !**

(2) "Careless talk, which might have drifted away over the moors, has been trapped by the media. A lot of hot air has been translated, *for better or for worse*, into cold print'.

The Listener, 14 February, 1963.

لقد اقتنصت أجهزة الإعلام كـثيراً من الأقوال التى ألقاها الناس على عواهنـها وتناقلهـا الرائحون والغـادون فى البرارى . أى إن الصـحف قد طبعت الكثير منها فأحالت الكثير من الشائعات المائعة إلى حقائق ثابتة ، **غير عابئة بالعواقب ، مهما تكن !**

(3) Some prime ministers, perhaps most great ones, have been interesting in themselves. They were eccentric either in character or behaviour. Gladstone appeared extraordinary, *for good or ill*, to everyone who met him.

The New Statesman (periodical)
17 September 1959

كـان بـعـض رؤسـاء الوزارات ، بل ربما أغلب رؤسـاء الوزارات العظام ، من الشـخصيـات الطريفة ، وكـانت غرابة أطوارهم تتـبدى فى الطبع أو فى السلوك ، وقد شهـد كل من قابل جلادستون بأنه كـان غير عادى ، **فقال البعض إنه فذ والبعض الآخر إنه شاذ .**

As a variant of 'for better or worse', *'for good or ill'* is only distantly related to the concept of 'foul or fair' or of 'rain or shine'; the implied الخير والشر must be adapted, when applied to character or

behaviour (more of this later) to suggest either the quality of being remarkable (outstanding or exceptional) in a good sense, hence the Arabic فذ (often translated as unique) or of being remarkable (unusual, singular) in a bad sense, hence the Arabic شاذ (often translated as abnormal, or queer). The phonological link between شَذَّ and فَذَّ suggests substitution, a common enough principle of Arabic morphology : and the semantic differences confirm this possibility. Indeed, the ALA dictionary (الوسيط) gives the following definitions :

(الفَذُّ) : الفرد . والفذُّ المتفرد فى مكانته ، أو كفايته .

(شَذَّ) : انفرد عن الجماعة أو خالفهم ، وشَذَّ الكلام : خرج عن القاعدة وخالف القياس .

(الشاذ) : المنفرد

(الفَذَّةُ) : الشَّاذة

The idea of being *individual* (adj) is common to both, so much so, in fact, that one form of the lexical item is interpreted in terms of the corresponding form of the other item. How the one came to be so different in meaning from the other is due, primarily, to usage. Now listen to the following statement about William Wordsworth, variously attributed to people who knew him as a young boy and quoted all too often about his 'individual' habits (unusual, eccentric ?) : 'This boy will be remarkable, his mother once said, *for good or ill*' (Meyers, *The Early Life of Wordsworth*, p. 7, and other sources). The statement sounds modern, a twentieth-century idiom, as it occurs in the English translation by Matthews of Emile Legouis' French Book *La Jeunesse de William Wordsworth* (1926). I have not seen the original French, but I have seen the original statement by the poet's mother as recorded by Mary, the poet's wife, in her *Memoirs*, preserved in MS. D.C.P. p. 9,

and referred to faithfully by Mary Moorman in her biography of Wordsworth :

> "But of William his mother had said that he was the only one of her five children about whom she felt any anxiety : he had such capacities, *for good or evil.* (p. 19)

Possibly Legouis did 'evil' into 'mal', then Matthews, not having seen the original manuscript (D.C.P.) put it back into the modern idiom. If this was the case, then the idea of الخير والشر has to be read into the old form of the idiom, allowing for a diachronic approach to even such idioms as have come to be so common. And the translator will be well-advised to note the change in meaning : for a possible خيراً أم شراً can be used in certain contexts. The translator is forced to be an interpreter, *regardless* – that is, rain or shine !

(iii)
Decomposition decomposed

If interpretation is so essential to the translator's work, some will argue, the entire process of translation will fall outside the realm of *Semantics* proper, which is the branch of linguistics most relevant to translation. The fact is that work in linguistic semantics has led to the birth of the 'decomposition' theory, alternatively 'componential analysis', and highly useful observations have been made towards the establishment of a system of analysis capable of universal application. The basic flaw in the 'system' is that the meanings to be analysed are well defined and established beforehand. The only examples used are those which are least likely to be controversial – man, woman etc. Whenever there is a departure from a well- established meaning, the

authors fall silent. As we have seen, culture plays a central rôle in interpretation, though linguists will be loth to admit such extraneous factors that are so difficult to formalize. Christiane Nord has in a recent book (*Translation as a Purposeful Activity*, UK, 1997) explained *Skopostheorie*, that is, the theory that applies the notion of *Skopos* (a Greek word for 'purpose') to translation, maintaining that 'the prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose (*Skopos*) of the overall translation action.' 'This', she argues, 'fits in with intentionality being part of the definition of any action' (p. 27). Her main source, the author of *Skopostheorie* itself, is Hans J. Vermeer who, in his 'Framework for a General Translation Theory', 1978, states his general position as follows :

> Linguistics alone won't help us. First, because translating is not merely and not even primarily a linguistic process. Secondly because linguistics has not yet formulated the right questions to tackle our problems. So let's look somewhere else. cited in Nord (1997), p. 10

His position has since been adapted and given wide circulation by a group of European translation theorists, some of whom, like Katharine Reiss, had been trained linguists and expert translators themselves. Nord's book is mandatory reading for all practising translators and interpreters, but is important for our purposes here only because of its emphasis on the intercultural aspect of translation.* The upshot of the entire *Skopostheorie* is to minimize the importance of the source text and maximize the significance of the cultural situation. 'Adequacy' is

* Cf. Enani, 'Translation as Interpretation' in *Comparative Moments*, Cairo, 1996. In this work 'interculturality' is proposed as the framework for every 'translation action' involving a comparative situation.

substituted for 'equivalence', and, in her 'Pragmatic Aspects of Translation', Reiss argues that the idea of equivalence is no longer defensible, that the only means of judging the 'adequacy' of a given translation is to gauge the extent to which the 'aim' of the source text has been realized in the TL text. Reiss and Vermeer collaborated in the early 1980s, but their joint book, in German, *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie**, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1984, was never done into English, though translated into Spanish (1996). From Nord's exposé and the many articles published in this field so far, one gathers that the tendency in modern translation studies has been towards an integrated, dynamic approach that makes very little use of linguistic semantics.

Striking examples of *skopostheorie* have been given in part (ii) of this essay; and many more could be given to illustrate the need to take the theory seriously. It will be shown, in fact, that even at the level of direct lexical analysis most translators apply that theory intuitively. Foremost semanticians have not been unaware of the need for an overall theory to encompass and deal adequately with the shortcomings of componential analysis (decomposition) but they could never know where to begin. The established 'decomposition' theory has passed through many stages of 'refinement' but, up till 1999 (cf. Trask's *Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics*, 1999) no agreement has yet been reached. A good summary by Lyons has been given in his 1995 *Linguistic Semantics*, but, again, every theory presupposes that every word should have a definite meaning capable of analysis into 'necessary and sufficient conditions' (later said to be built from primitives) which, according to Jackendoff, 'nicely satisfies' our 'common-sense'

* Groundwork for a General Translation Theory.

intentions (1983, p. 113). Jackendoff says that for several reasons such a theory 'fails' (109) and gives convincing examples of such a failure, quoting Putman (1975) who cautions :

> The amazing thing about the theory of meaning is how long the subject has been in the grip of philosophical misconceptions, and how strong these misconceptions are. Meaning has been identified with a necessary and sufficient condition by philosopher after philosopher ... On the other side, it is amazing how weak the grip of the facts has been.
>
> (cited in Jackendoff, p. 113)

In fact, Putman was objecting to the Logico-philosophical approaches that evolved alongside the linguistic approaches and developed from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s and were apparently required by the pseudo- scientific approaches to language and cognition. To be able to formalize, a researcher must be prepared to accept the so-called 'necessary and sufficient conditions' (شروط التعريف الجامع المانع) which may be summed up in the following premise :

> a. The meaning of a word can be *exhaustively* decomposed into a *finite* set of conditions that are collectively necessary and sufficient to determine the reference of the word.
>
> (my emphasis) (*Ibid*, p. 112)

Many scholars make the following assumption as well :

> b. The satisfaction conditions are stated in terms of a finite set of semantic / conceptual primitives.

Behind these two assumptions was the influential book written by Alfred Tarski, back in 1956, entitled *Logic, Semantics and Mathematics*, London, OUP, where the central essay deals with 'The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages', pp. 152-197 (reprinted in Susan Tavakolian, ed. *Language Acquisition and Linguistic Theory*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1980, pp. 25-49). Most treatments of meaning have since been based on Tarskian truth-conditions and assume premise (a) above, beginning with Katz's fairly explicit theory of decomposition (componential analysis) which seems to accept premise (b) as well, in his two seminal books : *The Philosophy of Language*, New York, 1966, and *Semantic Theory*, NY, 1972. His subsequent books and articles confirm such a Tarskian approach up till his 'Chomsky on Meaning', published in *Language*, 56, pp. 1-41 in 1980. The 1970s may be seen as the decade of the Tarskian model : the 'generative Semantics' of, say, George Lakoff (1971) depends totally on premise (a); Roger Schank's theory of Conceptual Dependency Structure (1973, 1975) accepts it whole-heartedly; as does Norman and Rumelhart's theory of 'Structural networks' (1975). Both premises are used in the analyses undertaken in 1976 by Miller and Johnson-Laird in what the authors call 'procedural semantics', though reservations are expressed here and there on premise (b). Jackendoff himself, in his analysis of 'verb meaning' in 1976 (in a lengthy study published in *Linguistic Inquiry*, 7.1 entitled 'Toward an Explanatory Semantic Representation' pp. 89-150) accepts both premises, though he later recants and produces his 1983 book in opposition to such Tarskian concepts.

Opposition to componential analysis (the decomposition theory) began as early as 1980 in a short but highly important article published in *Cognition* and entitled 'Against Definitions'. The authors (Jerry A.

Fodor, Merrill Garrett, E. Walker, and C. Parkes here reject both premises (a *and* b) on the grounds that the number of 'convincing exhaustive decompositions in the literature is *vanishingly* small' (p. 263) (my emphasis). The article was followed by a series of articles and books in support of Fodor, primarily from a psycho-philosophical angle, but with concrete linguistic analysis, where the effect of both Wittgenstein and Derrida looms large. Terms like 'family resemblances' from the former and *differance* from the latter repeatedly appear in the literature, culminating in an 'amused silence' about 'decomposition', and in relegating 'componential analysis' to chapters on the 'history' of semantics. One may attribute the opposition to this approach to anxiety about what Fodor calls 'semantic residue' : no matter how exhaustive your analysis is, there will always remain a part or parts that cannot be accounted for. As some readers of my essay will be Arabic–speaking students who may not be fully conversant with the subject, I shall briefly explain 'componential analysis' and why it is or can be of use to the translator.

Decomposition, or componential analysis, means breaking up the meaning of a word into a small number of semantic components عناصر دلالية/ مكونات دلالية or semantic features ملامح/ معالم دلالية each with a value قيمة حسابية (*plus* زائد for *present* موجود and *minus* ناقص for *absent* غائب – sometimes also *zero* صفر for *irrelevant* غير ذى صلة). The following example, based on Trask (1999) should illustrate this.

In Arabic there are words for horse (or steed or stallion etc) that, on analysis, reveal obvious *gaps*. Thus جواد may be analysed as + ذكر + بالغ + حصان and the Arabic فرس as + حصان +/– ذكر + بالغ and مهر as + حصان + ذكر – بالغ. There is a gap, therefore, in MSA [though not

in archaic Arabic (namely حجر)] for the English *filly* : + horse + female + adult, while there are MSA words for adult horses and for colts. The *minus* value in 'colt' is called a *distinguisher* or a *semantic marker*, as it distinguishes the young horse from the adult; and the positive value (+ female) marks 'filly' as different from, or as being in *binary opposition* to the male. If we are to translate the Arabic فرس into English, the marker +/– will reveal a gap in the target language as no English word can be used for both male and female adult horses. The amazing thing is that English is the language expected to have common +/– markers with regard to gender but, being such animal lovers, the British will seldom refer to an animal or a bird as 'it', if its sex is known : if unknown, the rule is to use the masculine pronoun, and the feminists have not as yet objected to that. English distinguishes between a dog and a bitch, but the cat is referred to as 'he'. The elements thus specified in the analysis are sometimes called *semantic primitives* عناصر دلالية أولية and they may include, according to the Katzian *decompositional theory*, the values of singular vs plural. Here different markers may be needed, as some words exist only in the plural, others only in the singular, with possible lexical gaps for the translator to fill. Even with regard to الخيل itself, a marker of '+ plural only' may not be sufficient : further distinguishers are required to show that there is an added pragmatic sense besides being the regular plural of 'horse' [e.g. « والخيل والبغال والحمير لتركبوها » "And (He has created) horses, mules, and donkeys, for you to ride" – *The Bee*, 8] namely that the word implies 'horses mostly or especially used by soldiers' (knights) :

١ « وأعدوا لهم ما استطعتم من قوة ومن رباط الخيل » . (الأنفال - ٦٠)

Against them make ready Your strength to the utmost of your power, including *steeds of war,*

Yusuf Ali

Make ready for them all thou canst of (armed) force and of *horses tethered* ...

Pickthall

Make ready for them whatever force and *strings of horses* you can.

Arberry

٢ - « وأجلب عليهم بخيلك ورجلك » . (الاسراء - ٦٤)

Make assaults on them with the *cavalry* and the *infantry.*

Yusuf Ali

And urge thy horse and foot against them.

Pickthall

And rally against them thy horsemen and thy foot.

Arberry

It will be useful, perhaps, to contrast the literal but absolutely correct version of Yusuf Ali with the wrought up phrase by Pickthall where 'horse and foot' as a fixed phrase means both divisions of an army; hence whole forces : the British adverbial use implies 'with all one's might'. This is, in fact, the meaning of the Quranic verse in context, as God is challenging Satan to attack men 'with all the devil's might'; and the metaphor is well noted. In Shakespeare we remember, when the Lord Chief Justice asks whether all the king's forces are back, Gower answers :

No; fifteen hundred foot, five hundred horse
Are marched up to my Lord of Lancaster
Against Northumberland and the Archbishop.

2 Henry IV, II. i. 186-8

While Arberry is content with the elliptical use of 'foot' for 'foot soldiers', Pickthall revives the old use of horse as both singular and plural and combines it with an idiomatic English phrase, so close *functionally* to the Arabic. Here is what the OED says about the plural use of 'horse' :

> The plural was in OE (i.e. Old English) the same as the singular; *horses* appears c. 1205 and is now usual in literary language, though horse sometimes appears as the collective plural.

It is in fact as though Pickthall intuitively felt the power of the elliptical Arabic construction and succeeded in finding a functional equivalent, in terms of *Skopostheorie*, by thus filling the lexical gap of خيل . A kind of componential analysis has thus been undertaken at an intuitive level, thanks to the translator's perfect command of both Arabic and English cultures.

The 'extreme suspicion' with which componential analysis is being viewed, because of the 'semantic residue' that seems to worry the linguists, can be dispelled if factors such as cultural considerations and the diachronic dimensions are taken into account. A set of 'necessary and satisfying' conditions may be obtained through a decompositional theory that could fully account for cultural mutations and development; in other words, componential analysis can come to serve *Skopostheorie*

by resorting to relativity rather than 'absolutism', and by assuming that words are living entities that change in time and that such change can be decomposed according to context, not according to a 'definite set of rules'. The linguistic semanticians are unfortunately too immersed in the process of formalization to allow for relativity or cultural considerations. The progress from Katz's *Semantic Theory* (NY, 1972) to Jackendoff's *Semantic Structures* (MIT, 1990) to John Lyon's *Linguistic Semantics* (London, 1995) to John Saeed's *Semantics* (Oxford, 1997) has been a consistent attempt at formalizing the unformalizable – a serious effort at establishing a minimum of 'necessary and satisfying conditions' for the safest of examples (man, woman, boy, girl etc.) whilst avoiding any lexical item likely to suggest more, or to rely on cultural factors, or, to suggest any diachronic features. But the translators themselves have shown the fear of 'uncertainty' – a ghost that could keep any academician awake at night – to be a mere illusion. By relaxing the rigid rules of the decompositional theory, 'necessary and satisfying conditions' will be established for even the most slippery of all terms – abstractions. And this is what Anna Wierzbicka has done.

(iv)
Family resemblances : meaning and structure

The translators', and translation scholars' impatience with linguistics may be justifiable only insofar as the principles of semantic theory – at least those which have so far been worked out with any certainty – fail to account for the specific, 'local' deviations noted in the significations of verbal signs, hitherto believed to be universal.

Structural differences can be analysed with relative ease : when the Bible says 'Thou shalt not ...' it is easy for the translator to find an equivalent, according to *Skopostheorie*, in «حُرِّمَ عليكم...» and the difference may be put down with relative certainty to historico-cultural factors. When the Arabic poet says : « أين منى ضريحها... » the translator will find a functional equivalent in "Where is her tomb ..." or "I wish I knew where her tomb was !" but when the same expression occurs in a different context – say « أين من عينىّ هاتيك المجالى » – the functional equivalent will be different : "such beauteous sights have been barred from my eyes" or "Oh, that my eyes can enjoy those beauteous sights again !" As in the case of the English expressions cited in Part (i) of this essay, the structure follows naturally from the meaning, grasped intuitively, with reference to the target language tradition. Individual differences will always distinguish one translator's conception of function from another's, hence the slight variations in the interpretation, but a core will always be possible to establish. It may be possible in fact to adapt the often-quoted passage in Wittgenstein about family resemblances to make the resemblances apply to the various forms given to that core of meaning by different translators / interpreters :

> "We see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing : sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarity of detail.
>
> 67. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances";
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1953, pp. 31-32.

The 'family', to maintain the metaphor, is the *culture*; and it is within that culture that certain linguistic structures are born which pertain to that culture alone. A number of structures in a given language may be found to 'express' or 'deal with' a single idea, forming a kind of cluster, and all performing nearly the same function. 'Preference rules', to use a favourite semantic term, are not determined by the context – which should, ideally, designate a single line of meaning – but by the specific interpretative and expressive training of the translator. The same Quranic context, as we have seen, produces a variety of structures expressing the idea of 'cavalry and infantry' : and according to decompositional theories they are all perfectly equal in value. No amount of further componential analysis could result in any change in structure or meaning. Their functional differences, if any, are insignificant : but they are different. If the dissimilarities are to be attributed to each translator's response to the culture of the target language, not to that of the source text, the common features they share must be seen as 'family resemblances'.

Can there be a mode of componential analysis capable of establishing links between *Skopostheorie* – functional translation seeking solely to achieve the *intention* of a given text – and traditional theories of meaning which assume the primacy of the source text and seek to re-enact the linguistic performance as faithfully as possible ? Semanticians, as we have seen, have not been much help. Katharina Reiss (1984) has tried, we are told, to focus on a 'specific' theory integrating her text typology into the framework of functionalism (Nord, 150). I have been fortunate to come across an English translation of her German article 'Text types, translation types and translation assessment' in Andrew Chesterman's (ed.) *Readings in*

Translation, Helsinki, 1989, where certain text 'types' are regarded as requiring 'invariance of function' (p. 152) in the sense that, regardless of the semantic or syntactic variations in the target text, the function assumed in certain source texts should always be the same. This is, in fact, far from new, and every translator will know from experience that the function of a legal target text will never change – as is the case with most scientific texts – contrary to the assumed functions of literary, argumentative, or other more reader-oriented texts. One way of establishing such a link is, paradoxically, to go down the 'Anti-Formalist Road', as Stanley Fish calls it in his *Doing What Comes Naturally* : London, 1989 (1995 edition used). In chapter after chapter of this 600-odd-page book, Fish argues strongly against 'Formalism' as a mode of thought that by itself either created rigid 'methods of analysis' which aspire to the abstraction of mathematics in linguistics, from Chomsky onward, or caused havoc by a reaction to it, violently culminating in the deconstructive / destructive onslaught. His argument, succinctly stated here, is that all thinkers and writers down the centuries have always done *what comes naturally*, that is, treating language and meaning as both fixed *and* changing. As early as page 7 in the book he states that it is his

> contention ... that the abandonment of formalism – of the derivation of meaning from mechanically enumerable features – has always and already occurred.

As both Professor of English and Professor of Law, Fish knows better than to sacrifice practice for the sake of theory, or the other way round. In fact, the subtitle of his book is '*Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies*'. What comes out

clearly from his attack on formalism is that the formalistic approach has been based on too many presuppositions, creating a number of unrealizable 'constraints' to meaning, and that belief in *Theory* as theory has done much damage to work in linguistic and legal studies.

To follow Fish is to allow too much faith in the synchronic approach, however, by reposing too much trust in usage (current usage). For the Arabic translator, this 'road' (system) for all the free play of the interpretive powers it affords, is hazardous. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is still taking shape and few words can be said to have had their meanings established in MSA beyond a shadow of doubt (even with so many naturalized concepts, as shown in part (i) of this essay). It is a language immersed in our ancient culture; and however freely it may make use of Egyptian Arabic words, the basic structures, including syntax, morphology and phonology are determined by archaic (so-called classical) Arabic. Perhaps the links sought between *Skopostheorie* and traditional theories of meaning, and which, I believe, are needed for a new mode of componential analysis, will be found in a culture- oriented approach of the kind attempted by Anna Wierzbicka. She has tried to establish 'universal human concepts in culture-specific configurations' – the subtitle of her *Semantics, Culture and Cognition*, OUP, 1992. The titles of her chapters should, by themselves give us an indication of the kind of research she has undertaken. Her introduction is entitled 'Are languages essentially the same or essentially different : universalism and cultural relativism'. In its penultimate section the introduction deals with the 'limits of translatability' – a provocative enough topic. 'Language as a mirror of culture and national character' is the subject of the last chapter.

The study of Arabic culture, ancient and modern, will help us to discover an infinite number of structures, which may be grouped in sets or clusters that share a core of meaning but appear rather different. Functionally they may be regarded as semantically equal, fulfilling the principle of *Skopostheorie* correspondence : though, decompositionally, they cannot be said to have the 'necessary and satisfying conditions'. If, however, the idea of 'family resemblances' is accepted, the preference rules facing the translator will be limited. Bearing in mind the diachronic dimension, a translator will easily be able to decide, through an intuitive componential analysis, which structure should fulfil the function required, and so fulfil the conditions of *Skopostheorie*, on reasonably solid semantic basis.

This is, in effect, what most Arabic scholars have been doing down the centuries, though never thinking in terms of modern theories. Just to show how MSA is steeped in the idiom of our ancient culture, consider the opening lines of a famous poem by Ibrahim Nagui, a twentieth-century poet, slightly adapted and sung by Om Kolthoum (previously handled, in part, in part ii of chapter I) :

يا فـؤادى رحـم الله الهـوى   كان صرحاً من خيال فهوى
اسقنى واشـرب على أطلاله   وارو عنى طـالما الدمـع روى
كيف ذاك الحب أمسى خبراً   وحديثاً من أحاديث الجـوى

Literally :

O my heart ! God rest the soul of love !
It was a palace of fancy, then fell down.
Drink to me over the ruins,
And recite my verses,

For as long as the tears report
[Quenching the thirst]
How such a passion turned into a history,
A tale of woe, and a love-story !

Almost indefensible, you'll say, but this is the point ! The puns cannot (as mentioned earlier), be translated – الهوى and فهوى – and روى which has another meaning given between square brackets. Even at the level of literal translation, the role of tradition cannot be ignored. The expression رحـم اللـه is a fixed phrase (a dead figure, in fact) for 'is dead'. It literally means, of course, 'May God have mercy on', the nearest equivalent in English being 'God rest his soul'. Then comes the صرح من خيال : Is it a 'palace of fancy' or 'a palace in fairy land' – 'a castle in the air' ? Is صرح equal to قصر – hence to palace or edifice, or castle ? Is خيال fancy, pure and simple ? 'Drink to me' is equal enough to اسقني واشرب but the 'ruins' is such a basic concept in Arabic culture that no English equivalent, however fluent or expressive, will ever be able to put it across. Perhaps even more closely associated with the Arab tradition is ارو and روى – that is, "report" and "reported", though, as explained, with a pun on the latter, viz. 'to quench the thirst', confirmed or bolistered by the literal meaning of جوى as 'thirst' (cf. فقه اللغة للثعالبي). The final حب and جوى are both elegant variations on هوى , regardless of the slight differences, for the family resemblances here are too obvious to ignore (A comparison with the earlier English version given above (chapter I, part ii) should confirm this.

Yet this is a mid-20th century poem, in MSA, and is still regarded as 'modern'. The fact that it is in verse naturally accounts for the deliberate use by the poet of 'key' references to the poetic tradition, but the initial expression رحم الله is used in MSA quite commonly :

(Egyptian) الله يرحم أيام زمان

(MSA) رحم الله الماضى

1. The good old days are truly gone !
2. In vain do we weep the good old days !
3. Old times are dead and buried !
4. How we wish the good old days are back !
5. But oh ! for the good old days !

The variant structures allow for individual differences, no doubt, but share definite family resemblances : and in each case the preference rule is determined by the translator, not the context. The same could be said of (خبر) as we still in Egyptian Arabic use فى خبر كان to mean 'gone for ever' and use the noun not only for a piece of news but also for a 'tale of yore'. The implied link between يروى and حديث relates to the religious tradition where 'statements by the prophet are reported' and are thus kept alive.

The use of the genitival constructions in صرح من خيال and حديث من أحاديث الجوى may account for the amphibologies which are welcome in poetry, but resented in modern scientific prose. The grammatical structures are in fact far from dead in MSA, and one is forced to resort to the archaic roots of many such structures if only to establish the meaning of a given expression.

Some Arabic dictionaries acknowledge the links with the tradition that explain some of the family resemblances, but these are rare and far from exhaustive. The growth of MSA may be said to owe a great deal to the filling not only of lexical but also of structural gaps. The translators have been credited with recognizing such gaps, and of filling them, either by borrowing or by coining : the living language, Egyptian

Arabic, provided most of the structures that have been occasionally standardized by journalists and eminent writers, but abstractions remain too difficult to handle.

(v)
Diachronic / cultural decomposition

If MSA is a living language, because used in writing and, being a variant form of the spoken language, in thinking, it should be possible to apply the combined rules of cultural-diachronic componential analysis to most of its words. This can, in fact, be done in many cases where usage has established a 'current sense' for a given term. Currency has sometimes been ensured through association with a foreign word, which has helped users of MSA to feel on solid ground when using modern political or economic terms, for instance, with the expectation that the reader has a more or less universal 'frame of reference'. Fine points of semantic significance are then easily thrown overboard, as usage becomes the only yardstick usable. If one reads in a current newspaper that someone is demanding a stop to the use of assassination, or the condemnation of all parties that resort to assassination, the Arabic word for this term (اغتيال) will be given the full implications of its English (and French) counterpart. As observed by Chomsky (1972, 143) the object of assassinate يغتال must be a prominent figure and the subject must be credited with political motives. Jackendoff comments that 'how such restrictions as these can be decomposed into primitives has never to my knowledge been addressed' (1995, p. 114). The complexity of the verb is due to cultural factors that cannot be 'glossed over' as the constraints noted by Jerry A. Fodor (1970) regarding the decomposition of 'to kill' as 'cause to

die'. The article in which he objects to such analysis seems to have been in reply to the analysis of "kill" as CAUSE TO BECOME NOT ALIVE, described by Jackendoff as "the mainstay of decomposition theory ever since McCawley (1968) used it to motivate generative semantics" (*Ibid*, 113). Fodor's article, entitled "Three Reasons for NOT Deriving "Kill" from "Cause to Die", gives unexpected differences between the verb and its analysis; one is :

> One can cause someone to die on Tuesday by shooting him on Monday, but one cannot kill someone on Tuesday by shooting him on Monday.
>
> *Linguistic Inquiry*, 1.4, 433

Fortunately we do not have to engage in such polemics when dealing with the correspondence between the Arabic قتل and the English "kill", or, as I have suggested, between the Arabic يغتال and "assassinate". Going to Arabic dictionaries will be of little use, as the entry for يفتعل) يغتال (will come under غول / غال and here is the entry in the ALA Dictionary (الوسيط) – in brief :

(غاله) يغوله غولاً أهلكه ، وغاله أخذه من حيث لا يدرى فأهلكه . . .
(اغتاله) أخذه من حيث لا يدرى فأهلكه
(الغيلة) الاسم من الاغتيال . يقال قتله غيلة : على غفلة منه .

The common element (the basic component) is that the killing is done without the victim being at all aware of it : in this sense it simply means to take him unawares, *CAUSING HIM TO DIE*. The "unawares" component is implied in the English assassinate; but the modern sense of the Arabic word is not specified by the ALA dictionary. Many readers will be aware, I am sure, of the origin of the

word : it comes from the Arabic حشاشين and is said to refer to a group of *Shiite* militants led by Hassan al-Sabah who gave them *hashish* (Indian hemp) to smoke and under its influence made them see visions of paradise, suggesting that the condition for heavenly bliss was to kill their political opponents 'unawares'. This is how *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines the term :

> assassin [[Fr. < ML *assassinus* < Ar. *hashshashin*, hashish users < *hashish*, hemp]] 1. [A-] a member of a secret terrorist sect of Moslims of the 11th – 13th cent., who killed their political enemies as a religious duty, allegedly under the influence of hashish. 2. A murderer who strikes suddenly and by surprise : now usually used of the killer of a political important or prominent person.

The definition includes both diachronic and synchronic aspects of the verb, whilst the Arabic entry stresses only the 'sudden' and 'surprise' elements of the killing.

The fault with most Arabic dictionaries is that they, almost without exception, give all forms of a given word under an assumed 'root', much in the same way as Dr. Johnson used the infinitive as the entry form, or *lemma*, for the verbs in his dictionary. I use the term 'assumed' advisedly, as many words used in both ancient and modern Arabic cannot be traced to any such 'roots'. The translator must, however, accept the implication that homonyms, that is, phonological words with unrelated senses such as عَصَا (stick) and عَصَى (disobey) ذهبٌ

(gold) ذَهَبَ (went) are somehow related. So, under the same lemma here, the ALA dictionary gives :

* . . . ويقال غالته الخمر إذا شربها فذهبت بعقله أو بصحة بدنه ، وغالته الأرض : هلك فيها ، وغالته الغول : ضل عن المحجة .

* . . . (غاول) بادر في السير وغيره ، وغاول الأعداء بادرهم بالغارة والشر . . . واغتالت الخمر فلاناً غالته .

* . . . (تغوّل) الأمر ، تناكر وتشابه : أى أشكل . وتغولت المرأة : تشبهت بالغول فى تلونها . وتغولت الأرض بفلان : ضل فيها وهلك . وتغولت الغيلان القوم أضلتهم عن المحجة .

* . . . (الغائلة) الفساد والشر ، والغائلة الداهية (ج) غوائل .

* . . . (الغَوْل) ما ينشأ عن الخمر من صداع وسكر . وفى التنزيل العزيز ﴿ لا فيها غولٌ ولا هم عنها يُنْزفون ﴾ والغوْل بُعْد المفازة لأنها تغتال من يمر بها . يقال مفازة ذات غول بعيدة : وإن كانت فى مرأى العين قريبة . والغوْل المشقة . يقال هوّن الله عليك غول هذا الطريق . والغوْل التراب الكثير .

* . . . (الغُول) كل ما أخذ الانسان من حيث لا يدرى فأهلكه (ج) أغوال وغيلان . والغول مفرد الغيلان ، تزعم العرب أنه نوع من الشياطين يظهر للناس فى الفلاة ، فيكون لهم فى صور شتى ويغولهم ، أى يضللهم ويهلكهم . والغول كل شئ يذهب بالعقل . والغول المنية . والغول الداهية . يُقال غَالت فلاناً غول : إذا أهلكته .

. . . . . .

(المغالة) الحقد الباطن ، والمغالة الشر . يقال فلان قليل المغالة .

(المغول) سوط أو عصا فى باطنه سنان دقيق .

The omissions are the three lines given earlier so that we now have the *complete entry* for غول / غال / غيل and all cognates. The entry has

special interest for us because of the following added meanings, some of which may indeed be related to the earlier quoted sense :

* The destructive effect of wine on mind or body; to perish in the wilderness; to go astray.
* to start a journey, or to launch an attack on the enemy.
* (for an issue) to be confused or problematic.
* corruption and evil; calamity.
* To be drunk or to have a hangover; the vast expanse of the desert; hardship; too much dust.
* anything that takes a man unawares and destroys him; a ghoul is a kind of demon that takes a variety of forms, appears in the desert and kills people; death.

Now the last of these has been adopted in English and is thus defined in *Webster's New World* Dictionary :

> ghoul n. [[Ar. *ghul*, demon of the desert < ghala, to seize]]
> 1. Muslim Folklore an evil spirit that robs graves and feeds on the flesh of the dead 2. a person who robs graves 3. a person who derives pleasure from loathsome acts or things.

So deeply immersed is the word, with its cognates, in the culture of the ancients that it is well-nigh impossible to establish an *original* sense, a literal meaning, and allied, figurative, ones. Guesswork is the usual means of analysis. While we can distinguish in English between *homographs* – the senses of the same written word – and *homophones*, the senses of the same spoken word, few scholars can do this in Arabic

as the records of earlier pronunciation(s) are fuzzy, or at least, cannot be established with absolute certainty. Here we have, according to modern lexicographers, two homographs : GHAWL and GHOUL, written in the same way but pronounced differently. Both are nouns, and should, if they are indeed two different words, be given two separate entries. But the dictionary suggests only *polysemy* – a word with multiple *related* meanings, and the translator, or interpreter, is often at pains to relate the senses which may be unrelated.

The problem may not be insuperable if a system of componential analysis could be especially devised to account for family resemblances arising from cultural / diachronic factors. With the exception of a few words related to the above-quoted Arabic entry, which are still in use in MSA though actually tending to obsolescence, the entire entry may be regarded as obsolete or archaic. The following senses of the lemma are particularly lost : 'the vast desert', the 'too much dust', 'setting off on a journey', 'starting an attack on an enemy', and 'to be drunk or to have a hangover'. The sense of calamity and death may still be found in writings aspiring to the style of the classicists, but even this is quite rare.

The proposed cultural / diachronic decomposition is not, as might appear to the uninitiated translator, a means of liberating the interpreter from the constraints of the source text, especially in situations where *skopostheorie* requires traditional accuracy. On the contrary, the proposed system is simply a descriptive, rather than a prescriptive, model for what most successful translators already do, *intuitively*. Most find themselves subject to the constraints of the specific culture of the source text, however traditionally accurate they may be in translating the

words. The only kind of liberty it allows is that of individual interpretation, with the variant texts produced sharing 'family resemblances'. Accuracy in rendering (الله يرحم أيام زمان) as we have seen in the concluding part of the previous section *never* produced the *unacceptable* 'God rest the soul of, or have mercy on the olden days', but it gave five versions different enough to represent five different interpretations, while sharing enough family resemblances to secure the 'necessary and satisfying conditions' for each. The translators in four cases have accepted that أيام زمان must mean not 'old times' (as some translators of Pinter's play of that title have done) but rather 'the good old days'. Another component of their analysis is the nostalgia for 'time past' and, finally, the realization that it could never return. These elements are given implicitly in all five versions, which accounts for 'family resemblances', but one or more elements may be judged to be explicit enough to mark it as different. Each will fit in snugly into the ***skopostheorie***, and each takes account of the diachronic / cultural dimensions that are inherent in the Arabic original. The model may therefore pass the test with regard to structures – the English ones discussed in the parts i & ii and the Arabic ones discussed later – but will it do with regard to abstractions ?

(vi)
From concrete to abstract : Family Resemblances in a new key.

To apply the proposed model of componential analysis to Arabic abstractions is to raise the age-old question of whether the 'concrete' senses of words had always preceded abstractions in Arabic. The morphological rules familiar in Arabic imply concrete bases for most

words later transferred to the abstract level, mainly through metaphor. Hardly peculiar to Arabic, some scholars will claim; but Arabic is such an ancient language that the old and the current seem to co-exist happily in most unexpected situations. Words like قبض and بسط which at the simplest concrete level mean 'fold' and 'unfold', or 'hold' and 'spread' respectively, have acquired many abstract meanings (as well as concrete ones, of course) apparently related to a central sense. The ALA dictionary الوسيط seems to suggest that the noun قبضة (fist, folded hand) is the 'root' and most senses of the verb are made to relate to it; and a similar, though less emphatic suggestion is made for بسط . Most of the meanings given as abstractions, especially انقبض and انبسط – the self-reflexive verbs – are interpreted as metaphoric variants. Rules of phonological substitution allow for قبض to take the form of قبص and قَبَّطَ especially in the Quran, and for بسط to take the form of بصط . As القابض and الباسط are two of the 99 attributes of God, the so-called 'original' concrete senses will always exist side by side with the abstract ones, some of which are quite modern, such as الانقباض (dejection, depression) and الانبساط (expansiveness, cheerfulness). In fact, the latter term has been borrowed for 'extroversion', as opposed to 'introversion' (for which الانطواء has been given).

No one can be absolutely certain, however, that the concrete noun, or any concrete noun, was the etymological source of the infinite variety of abstractions that 'appear' to follow from the concrete term; nor can one ever be sure that a given root, usually a 3- or 4-letter verb in the past can e *first* or could be regarded as having come first. Our dictionaries are not historical nor do they ever attempt to trace the proper etymology of any word. 'Family resemblances' as a method should allow the translator not only to overcome the problem of derivation, but

also to allow for cultural factors to account for the apparent relatedness or unrelatedness of the many meanings that baffle the semantician in linguistic analysis. We shall therefore take an example of a concrete term, then of an abstraction, so as to see how difficult it is for the translator to rely only on Arabic dictionary definitions.

The Arabic شذا is given under شذو and the ALA dictionary الوسيط gives a bunch of apparently related senses, all assumed to spring from a 'root' meaning *strength*, which is made to relate to the common modern meaning of 'fragrance', through collocation (المصاحبة as Ibn Jinny ابن جنى calls this feature in الخصائص). The object, it will be remembered, seems to establish *polysemy*, not family resemblances :

* (شذا) المسك يشذو شذواً : قويت رائحته وانتشرت ، وشذا فلان تطيب بالمسك

(أشذاه) عنه : نحّاه.

(الشذو) المسك أو ريحه أو لونه

(الشذا) قوة الرائحة ، والشذا قطع العود الصغار يتطيب بها

(الشذاة) بقية القوة والشدة .

The authors seem to suggest, therefore, that because the 'root' verb *shadha* was associated with the *act of spreading*, assumed in *strong* fragrance, and associated with *musk*, (elsewhere said to come from the musk deer – as in المنجد) and the *power to spread*, the verb came to mean also 'to wear the musk perfume', and the noun الشذو (*shadhw*) came to mean the musk itself, its odour or colour. The other meaning given to the transitive verb أشذاه that is, to remove something or somebody, is in fact given immediately after sense 1, and before the common 'fragrance' sense, as though to ensure the 'root' sense, then is

further established in the last sense as 'what remains of any power or strength'.

The entry is flawed not only on account of its being incomplete, but because it reflects the tendency to assume a 'root' sense for the word and establish all other senses as somehow related to it. This is a far cry from the trend in modern European lexicography : different and *unrelated* senses are recognized and given under separate entries. In fact, the trend in Arabic lexicography to list all possible (recorded) meanings of a word under the same entry, suggesting polysemy rather than homonymy, may be traced to the anxiety felt by some philologists concerning 'purity', that is, the possibility that a given word may not be *purely* Arabic : and ideology here has driven many modern lexicographers to reject, and so omit to mention, meanings attributable to homonymy. A famous example is صالة (Italian *Sala*) never listed in any dictionary, but صآلة is listed as a cognate of صؤل which refers to the 'fury' of a camel. Older lexicographers did not worry too much about purity : some simply listed all the senses of a given word, even if they felt that the senses appeared unrelated. Foremost among these is Ibn Manzour, the great Egyptian lexicographer, who gives the following senses of the ord *Shadha*, albeit still under *Shadhw*, in his monumental لسان العرب (The Arabic Tongue) :

١- شذا كل شيء حدُّه والشذاة الحدة

٢- وضرم شذاه اشتد جوعه

٣- والشذا (مقصور) الأذى والشر . (وأشذى الرجل آذى)

٤- والشذاة ذباب والجمع شذاً (أزرق أو غيره)

٥- وشذا إذا تطيب بالشذو أى المسك ، والشذا كسر العود يُتطيّب به ، ولون المسك

٦- الشذا شدة ذكاء الريح الطيبة وقيل شدة ذكاء الريح

٧- والشذا الجرب

٨- والشذاة القطعة من الملح

٩- والشذا شجر يتخذ منه المساويك وله صمغ

١٠- والشذا ضرب من السفن .

1. Limit, edge, extremity; sharpness, strength.
2. Hunger. 3. Harm, evil 4. Flies (blue or any other kind)
5. *v*. to wear the musk scent; *n*. bits of sandal wood used for fragrance; the colour of musk.
6. The powerful blowing of fragrant breezes, or strong wind.
7. Scabies. 8. A piece of salt.
9. A kind of tree, whose wood is used in making tooth-brushes; has gum.
10. A kind of ship.

The senses cannot be related and, if the lexical items are arranged according to modern principles, they can easily be seen not to belong to a single 'root' meaning, especially as the initial sense is said to have been spelt with a 'd' not with a 'dh'. Some scholars will, I am sure, be at pains to create links between these senses, suggesting that *hunger*, for instance, is a *hyponym* for 'evil, harm', (the *hypernym*) or that 'flies' (blue or otherwise) could be related *in the tradition* to the same hypernym or *superordinate*, in the same way as scabies is. It will be argued that sense no. 5 is a *meronym* of sense no. 9; and that the 'root' sense *is* the opening one even though its original spelling, or its

'common' spelling, was different, — much in the same way as المعجم الوسيط does. But how can any scholar relate the last sense (a ship) to that assumed 'root' ? An ingenious and imaginative writer may suggest that those ships were one day made of the kind of tree referred to in sense no. 9, and may come up with an equally far-fetched relationship with 'salt' !

These *are* different senses, and some can be traced to loan words, such as the last sense, thought to have come from Persian*. But can a root sense of 'evil or harm' (with the associated flies and scabies) be related to 'fragrance' or the powerful, odorous breezes ? Difficult, if not impossible; for in the obscure Arabic tradition instances will be found of relating senses on the basis of antonymy rather than synonymy. And whole books have been produced on words that give contradictory senses – that is, a sense *and* its opposite. Still, insofar as the senses are concrete and capable of analysis *componentially*, the difficulty of establishing the meaning of each term will not be insuperable : books on semantics have solutions for most such problems. It is when the translator is faced with abstractions, especially those with a long tradition, that problems arise which defy solutions. And it is here that a diachronic / cultural mode of decomposition is most needed, within the family resemblances framework.

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* Two major authorities are cited at the end of the entry in *The Arabic Tongue* to the effect that that homonym is foreign. In Al-Tabari's *History* (تاريخ الرسل والملوك) the word is used to refer to a kind of raft (or float) used to carry provisions across a river, or even soldiers. Philologists have traced other forms of the homonym to other Semitic languages, but the question of 'loan words' is largely ignored in Arabic lexicography. One should remark, incidentally, that only senses 5 and 6 have survived the historical development of Arabic.

Books on semantics are mysteriously silent about abstractions. In Wierzbicka's book, the only one to tackle cross-cultural concepts, abstractions are handled philosophically first, *as cultural constructs*, before being dealt with semantically, that is, as lexical items capable of linguistic analysis. This is perhaps what we should try in handling Arabic abstractions – where no traditional method of componential analysis will do. Let us therefore trace the culture-specific qualities in a well known term like خُلُق (pl. أخلاق) beginning with a line of verse which has come to be almost proverbial, by Ahmad Shawqi :

وإنما الأمم الأخلاق ما بقيت ∴ فإن همو ذهبت أخلاقهم ذهبوا

The survival of a nation depends on [adherence to] morality :
If that is gone, the nation will die.

This is, of course, more of a paraphrase than a proper semantic translation (according to Newmark's definition) – the original reads more like :

A nation is its morality, for as long as morality survives :
If morality is gone, the nation will go !

Perhaps the meaning is closer to the following version, where the added words suggest a slightly different interpretation :

[The life of] a nation is [the life of] its morality
If morality is dead, the nation is also dead.

Now morality (or morals) is assumed to have a positive sense in the original context, and in all three English versions. What do our Arabic dictionaries tell us about الأخلاق ? It is the plural of خُلُق which is defined by the ALA Dictionary الوسيط as :

« حال للنفس راسخة تصـدر عنها الأفعال من خير أو شر من غـير حاجة إلى فكر وروية (ج) أخلاق »

That is :

> "An inveterate condition of the soul from which spring all actions, both good and bad, with no need to think or meditate on them".

The definition thus establishes an implicit link with الخلق or الخلقة that is, the natural disposition, or character, or innate constitution of a person – all suggested by the form in which a person is *created*. The suggestion is in fact not peculiar to, though more clearly specified by the ALA dictionaries; ***Al-Munjid*** gives the following definition (under sense 6) :

> ٦ - (a) خالـق مخالقـة القـوم : عاشـرهم بخلـق حسـن . (b) تخلـق بأخلاقه : تطبع بـطباعه // وتخلق بغير خلقـه : تكلف ما ليس من خلقه . ومنه « ليس التخلق بالأخلاق كالخلق » أى ليس من تكلف ما ليس له من الخلق كـمن كان الخلق فـيه طبعـاً وسجـية . (c) الخلْق والخُلُق ج أخـلاق : المـروءة // العـادة // السجـية // الطـبع // (d) « علم الأخـلاق » : أحـد أقسام الحـكمة الـعمليـة ويسمـونه أيضاً « الحكمة الخلقية » . (e) المختلق : الكريم الأخلاق .

Though the tendency here is to tip the balance in favour of good 'manners' (which differs from the neutral ALA definition) the implication is also that الخُلُق is related to الخَلْق – as sense 6 (c) gives the following meanings, perhaps in order of frequency : "chivalry / nobility or generosity of character // habit // natural disposition // nature //". The link is given explicitly, in fact, by Ibn Manzour in *The Arabic Tongue* :

وفى التنزيل ﴿ وإنك لعلى خلق عظيم ﴾* والجمع أخلاق ، لا يكسر على غير ذلك ، والخلق والخلق السجية . يقال خالص المؤمن وخالق الفاجر . وفى الحديث : ليس شيء فى الميزان أثقل من حُسن الخلق . الخلق بضم اللام وسكونها ، وهو الدين والطبع والسجية ، وحقيقته أنه لصورة الإنسان الباطنة ، وهى نفسه ، وأوصافها ومعانيها المختصة بها بمنزلة الخلق لصورته الظاهرة وأوصافها ومعانيها ، ولهما أوصاف حسنة وقبيحة ، والثواب والعقاب يتعلقان بأوصاف الصورة الباطنة أكثر مما يتعلقان بأوصاف الصورة الظاهرة ، ولهذا تكررت الأحاديث فى مدح حسن الخلق .

The Quran says "thou art of superb character"*. The only plural of *Khuluq* is *Akhlaq*. The word may be pronounced *Khuluq* or *Khalq*, and means innate constitution. A common saying is "Be sincere with the believer, but feign any manners required in dealing with the reprobate".. A prophet's tradition says : "Nothing carries more weight [on the last day] than high morality". Character also means a man's religion, natural disposition and innate constitution. The truth is that it represents that inner human being which is the soul. Its attributes and peculiar qualities are the inner version of the outer attributes and qualities. Each [of the internal and external beings] has both good and bad qualities. Recompense and punishment [in the other world] are more concerned with the qualities of the inner than with the qualities of the outer version; hence the frequency of statements in praise of good character in the Prophet's tradition".

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* Note that this verse has been rendered, variously, as :

1. "And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character" (Yusuf Ali)
2. "And lo ! thou art of a tremendous nature" (Pickthall)
3. "Surely thou art upon a mighty morality" (Arberry)

The translation of the preposition على as 'on' or 'upon' sounds strange, as the idiomatic expression « على خلق » means a man or a woman 'of good character'.

The link is further emphasized by the catch phrase عظيم الخَلْقِ والخُلُق which could have been part of a popular line of verse, where the first noun refers to the physical, the second to the moral constitution – that is, the psychological make-up as shown in the conduct. The cultural tradition supports the link : the Quran, being the most trustworthy record of the ancient use of the word, contains over 250 verses using the verb خَلَقَ and its cognates : خَلْق – يُخلقون – يُخلق – خُلقوا – تخلقُ – أَخلُقُ خُلُق – خَلاَق – اختلاق – – خُلِقَتْ – خُلِقَ – يَخْلقون – يخلُق – نخلقكم – تخلقُون – خالق – الخالقون – الخلاّق – مُخلَّقة . Of these, only a limited number refer to other than physical creation : the third (تخلقون) means the *invention* of a 'malicious lie' إفك – a meaning shared by اختلاق . The last two are explained in the Quranic context as : خَلاَق = الحظ والنصيب من الخير (an apportioned share of goodness) but outside the Quran as أخلاق (pure and simple) especially in the common phase : لا خلاق له – a meaning supported by the line of verse :

وإن بُليت بشخص لا خلاق له   فكن كأنك لم تسمع ولم يقل

If you are plagued by [verbal abuse from] an ill-mannered person,
Pretend you never heard, he never spoke.

Arab culture seems responsible for the linkage, and the concept may easily be traced in many verses of the Quran that establish God's will in the creation of man's physical and moral constitution : no wonder الخَلْق is so intimately related to الخُلُق in most exegeses, and, consequently, in most Arabic dictionaries. But common usage, as we have seen, tends to depart from the traditional link. Few writers use خُلُق with the afore-mentioned link in their minds : only when used as an abstract noun (الخلقة) does the link appear. It is not felt in other words such as (الخليقة) (and its plural خلائق) though the dictionary insists it also means 'natural disposition' or in the collective noun الخَلْق which

means 'people' or 'all creatures' (المخلوقات) . Indeed, most people will think of 'ethics' as a philosophical discipline when علم الأخلاق is mentioned, and الأخلاق by itself will refer either to morality (moral as opposed to immoral behaviour) or manners (good manners, decency, politeness) which can only be explained within the framework of family resemblances.

Now there is another, equally important sense of the 'root' word that seems to have no connection at all with all this, namely to 'be worn out' or to 'wear out'; with the possible pronunciation of the verb as خَلَق (يخلُق) خَلُق / خَلِق / and the other version أخلق also used both transitively and intransitively. It appears that we have here an instance of a verb that gives a meaning and its opposite – من الأضداد – which is a peculiarly Arabic feature. Our dictionaries give little help here : they simply list the meanings and give examples, but the problem falls outside the scope of this study.

It should by now be obvious that the cultural background cannot be ignored in attempting to establish the precise meaning of this central concept, for which a diachronic approach is definitely required. The problem is, of course, that the word will have a *distant* meaning, always implicit, and an immediate one which will change from one concept to another. Only family resemblances will help us here, as the following five statements from the tradition of Prophet Muhammad will adequately show :

١ - خياركم أحاسنكم أخلاقاً

٢ - إنما بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق

٣ - اللهم جنبنى منكرات الأخلاق

٤ - خصلتان لا تجتمعان فى مؤمن : البخل وسوء الخلق

٥ - اتق الله حيثما كنت ، وأتبع السيئة الحسنة تمحها ، وخالق الناس بخلق حسن

Now الأخلاق is twice qualified as 'bad', and three times as 'good', but 'character' is not indicated in any case. Let us consider possible renderings :

1. a. The best of you are the morally superior.
   b. The best-mannered are your élite.
   c. The best-mannered are morally best.

2. a. I have been sent primarily to advocate moral perfection.
   b. I have been sent solely to perfect the high ethical code.
   c. I have been sent essentially to complement high morality.

3. a. God help me to shun all ignominious conduct.
   b. May God help me to avoid all despicable manners.
   c. O God ! help me to avert all indecencies.

4. a. No believer can be both miserly and ill-mannered.
   b. Avarice and immorality cannot co-exist in a true believer.
   c. In a true believer, two qualities are mutually exclusive : parsimony and indecency.

5. a. Be God-fearing wherever you be but, having done a misdeed, a good deed, following, will wipe it out, and behave well towards all people.
   b. Be God-fearing wherever you be : if you do wrong, do some good afterward and it shall wipe out the wrong; and deal with people in the best manner possible.
   c. Show thy fear of God wherever thou be : if thou dost any wrong, do a good deed to wipe it out; and be good-mannered towards all people.

(vii)
Why 'Family Resemblances' at all ?

The differences between the three English versions for each of the five Prophetic sayings may, of course, be attributed to differences in interpretation. In example (2) the Arabic (إنّما) is interpreted variously as 'primarily', 'solely' and 'essentially'; Quranic interpreters prefer 'surely' and there can be many more, equally valid renderings. The predicate of the sentence is given three different interpretations which are close enough to one another, with both differences and similarities justifying the 'family resemblances' metaphor; so why not make do with 'interpretation' and jettison Wittgenstein altogether ? In other words, what can we possibly gain by this 'philosophical' stand when what we are dealing with is a semantic point, pure and simple ? The answer is this : the metaphor is needed because it tells us that the similarities and differences are produced by a *single family of interpretations*. The three English versions of example (1) above belong to a single 'cultural family', as I shall now explain; and other sets of interpretations can be produced from a different cultural point of view, so that the resemblances must belong to another 'family'. As previously mentioned, Arabic is a special case because the translator cannot disregard the fact that certain words (and structures) may carry old and new senses at once and may have, therefore, conflicting cultural matrices, with differently-looking families. Context alone cannot determine which family to opt for; words have been dealt with *in context* and still produced different English versions. The real determinant is the attitude of the translator which is decidedly culture-based. In the following paragraphs I shall show that the 'family resemblances' metaphor can help us to establish the cultural standpoint,

and that, in the case of Arabic, there is always a need for diachronic considerations.

However 'general' and 'universal' the elements it contains, every statement must (as shown in Part i above) belong to a specific culture. The act of translation involves transforming it into another culture. Now suppose that a statement belongs to *two cultures* at once, in the sense that it can be understood in terms of a culture of the past, as well as a contemporary culture *at the same time.* This may be rare in European languages because they all are modern; even the 'different' Shakespeare is only four hundred years old. Even so the translator automatically adjusts his or her linguistic machinery to get the sense intended. Portia's 'The quality of mercy is not strained' quickly changes in the translator's mind into 'There is no compulsion in mercy' or 'no one can be forced to be merciful' (as the *Shakespeare Made Easy* books will tell you). The approach is inevitably diachronic; but the culture has not changed, and the meaning of the key words in Shakespeare will not be too far removed from modern English, with the exception of the idiosyncratic terms with which we come to be familiar over the years. But in the case of ancient Arabic, to which the Prophetic sayings belong, another culture competes with our modern or contemporary culture for the determination of the meaning of the words and the structure. Let us, then, focus on example (1) given above.

The word أخلاق occurs in a sentence which includes another important word, if only because it is used in an *obsolete* sense, or does have such a sense, namely خيار . The modern meaning of خيار is either ('option') or 'cucumber'; but when used in the old sense it should acquire an extra 'a' in Arabic (أخيار) and so becomes the antonym of

(أشرار) (i.e. the 'good' and the 'evil'). A diachronic approach will reveal that the culture in which the statement was produced defined the 'best' in religious terms. And the cultural / diachronic approach helps to interpret morality in the same way. If that culture is adequately taken into consideration, a different set of translations will be produced which, regardless of the interpretations they may represent, must have family resemblances which belong to an older and a different 'family'. Here is a set of options

1. The most virtuous of you are the most decent.
2. The most pious of you are the most righteous.
3. The closest to God among you are those with the highest morality.

Delving deeper into the ancient culture will, no doubt, produce further versions which share the resemblances of the old family. To realize that what we are dealing with here *is* a different family, we should go back to the first three English versions suggested for the same Prophetic tradition, which belong to our modern world, if not to our permissive society : (where the concepts of 'virtue' and 'righteousness' are not in vogue).

1. Your élite are the best-mannered.
2. The best of you are the morally superior.
3. The morally best are the best mannered.

Differences in interpretation do not conceal the family resemblances, which are due to a modern cultural standpoint. Perhaps unconsciously the modern translator has equated morality with 'manners', a plausible enough equation, and has thought of the 'best' in

the most general terms — the 'pick of the bunch', 'la crème de la crème', and those enjoying moral (as opposed to physical) superiority. None of these alternatives is wrong; and the variations may be endless, but they still have the resemblances of the modern 'family'.

Looking again at the members of these two 'cultural families', diachronically distinguished, I noticed that there was no single instance of 'integrity', 'nature' or 'character', though, acording to the Arabic dictionaries consulted and according to the translators of the Quran, they should make an appearance somewhere. I noticed, too, that none of the epithets attached to the scoundrels, the bounders, the cads, the unscrupulous etc appeared anywhere. I repeatedly tried to insert some of them somewhere but, I must admit, miserably failed. The exercise proved useful, though : the words proved to belong to a different family altogether. The diachronic approach would not accept the terms peculiar to an alien culture — a totally unrelated family. In the process I noticed that the five Arabic statements, given above, share a community of 'universals' analysable only in the two categories thus established; and that, ancient or modern, the terms of the Arabic statements remain culture-specific.

The 'Family Resemblances' approach proves useful, therefore, in uncovering the 'cultural family' differences as well as the resemblances. Diachronicity is unavoidable, for the change in meaning can be imperceptible to the unwary or the beginner, not only in lexical items but also, and more seriously, in structures — and the fourth example is a glaring specimen of this.

When we say in MSA that two qualities cannot coexist in someone, we mean that they are mutually exclusive : if one exists, the other

cannot (لا يجتمعان) . And this is how the fourth example has been understood to mean (see the variants above). Is it reasonable to assume then that the Prophet accepts a true believer to be either ill-mannered or miserly ? Unlikely; as it contradicts every other relevant Prophetic tradition. Can 'Family Resemblances' help in any way ? The key words used are 'both', 'coexist' and 'mutually', all belonging to the modern structure; and all having a positive value. Let us go back to the ancient culture which cannot allow that 'sense'; and see whether the intention was that a true believer cannot be *either* miserly or ill-mannered. Plausible; hence the following variants :

1. No believer can be either miserly or ill-mannered.
2. Neither avarice nor immorality can exist in a true believer.
3. In a true believer two qualities are never to be found : parsimony and indecency.

In this case, however, the older 'cultural family' is in total contradiction with the contemporary; and the contradiction confirms that interpretation relies solely on the diachronic approach. It is the diachronic approach that establishes the old cultural context as the more valid. It is not only words, that is, individual words, that can be dealt with diachronically and culturally : structures too may be thus handled. Differences in interpretation may be dealt with in terms of family resemblances, but they are found, sometimes, to classify themselves naturally under certain cultural headings. In this essay the cultural headings have been confined to old and contemporary Arabic. Other cultures need not be as diachronic as Arabic; but in Arabic the diachronic and the cultural are too intimately related. And, as has been

shown, both are combined in our handling of any Arabic text, ancient or modern. Of the ancient enough has been said; of the modern more will be said elsewhere.

Chapter III
THE TRANSLATOR'S INTUITION EXLPORED :
An Approach to the Translation of Poetry

(i)
Introduction

'Intuition' was first introduced as a critical term at the turn of the century by Benedetto Croce, the Italian philosopher (1866–1952). Adopted by some of the New Critics and used occasionally in the inter-war years and up to the early 1950s, the term was washed away by the rising tide of the modern critical *Theory* in the 1960s (though maintained as a useful term in connection with the acquisition and use of language and almost given a new lease of life in modern Linguistics). The pseudo-scientific parlance of the modern Theory, following fast on the heels of the New Criticism but spreading less fast in the Anglo–American literary world, could not easily accommodate such a concept that seemed to savour too much of Hegelian idealism or, worse still, Croce's own 'spiritual idealism' (variously expressed as 'absolute spiritualism' or 'absolute historicism'. The modern Theory called everything in question, most of all what Croce would call 'cosmic afflatus'. It was too much to accept such a concept of intuition as was explained in Croce's *Estetica* (1902) though modified in 1908 and renamed 'lyrical intuition' (the unity of cognition and expression in a work of art) then again modified in 1918 and called 'cosmic intuition' (that relied on 'cosmic afflatus'). The modern Theory needed, as Verina

Jones puts it, 'a new, and more militant culture' (*Dictionary of Modern Culture*, ed. Justin Wintle, 1981, p. 83). Belief in intuition, however defined, would have posed a problem for the modern theorists seeking to establish purely objective modes of analysis not merely by relating the subject to the object but by regarding the *subject as object* and, in extreme cases, by abolishing the *idea of subject* itself. The post-modernists, who regarded the 'subject' (the mind) merely as a focal point where currents of cultural forces may be seen to converge, owe a great debt to the modern theory — where the author was once said to be 'dead'. Roots of the anti-subject discourse may, of course, be traced to earlier eminent philosophers and poets, not excluding the Marxists as well as their opponents, but the upshot of the extreme textualist approach has been a view that assigned a greatly reduced rôle to the creative mind, including the rôle of intuition. When one is told there is nothing outside the text, or that nothing should be sought outside the text, least of all in the mind of the author (dead or alive) one is left with a collection of signs, verbal or otherwise, which may be found to represent a cultural manifesto, or, as Derrida would have it, to relate only to one another, or to reflect a system of thought (Foucault's discourse) that represents an intellectual modality which should be the only document for the critic to explore. But should the mind of the author be regarded solely as an agent of a discourse determined only by objective (external) forces ? The writing has been on the wall for intuition for quite some time, and any discussion of the *subject* as a creative power at times sounded a little anachronistic.

Dissident voices have, however, been heard loud and clear. Faced with the inexplicable features of a given literary text, some critics have had to admit the existence of factors not easily accounted for in

so-called scientific terms. Critics have had to deal with texts (whether their approach was purely stylistic or the typical bottom-up critical analysis) where the combinations of thought, image and allusion forcefully suggested other than the regular cultural factors. There have been instances where only the dark workings of the poet's or the author's mind could account for the way a text is built up or created. A few critics have had to accept the mystery of the creative process, with some, like F.L. Lucas, attributing the mystery to the unconscious mind (*The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal*) and with others, drawing on recent linguistic scholarship, allowing only the unique, paradoxical or brilliantly memorable lines of verse, for instance, or peculiar phrases, statements or whole poems, in fact to be attributed to intuition. Roland Barthes came as close to Croce as can be imagined when he discussed in his *The Pleasure of the Text* the way in which the illogicalities of language are accepted in an original text, all the stunningly odd utterances of the poet — much in the same way that Susan Langer did in her *Philosophy in a New Key*.

The role of intuition in art may still be debated, but not, however, in language acquisition and use; and in so far as literature is a linguistic art, intuition must be recognized as a factor at work in every literary text of real merit. It is now felt to be most potent in the composition of poetry, and, for a translator intent on reproducing a work of art not merely as a paraphrase or a document containing the prose sense of the poem but as a work of art in the target language (TL) capable of performing *almost* the same function of the source text (ST), intuition must be used in 'reception' and 'reproduction'. By reception is meant the particular response of the translator to the text, and all the issues raised by this response, as dealt with in 'reader-response' criticism. By

'reproduction' is meant the way in which the translator assumes the position of the ST poet in re-writing the poem in TL. Before examining either, a factor which may be described as 'lexical limitation' must be examined in so far as it greatly influences the translator's intuition. It concerns certain aspects of second language teaching in the Arab world which, though central to this process, have not received adequate attention. Few scholars have dealt with these aspects and, as a teacher of English and translation for forty odd years, I shall have to rely on my personal experience in handling them. As I rely here also on my experience in translation (a life-long occupation, in fact) I shall call it a personal note.

(ii)
Lexical Limitation in Language Learning – a personal note

Common discussions of the work of the literary translator presuppose 'perfect' bilinguality – the ability to master two languages and have fully developed linguistic intuition in both. But complete or 'perfect' bilinguality is an illusion. Even among those who enjoy rare linguistic talents, one language will be dominant : the other language may be excellent, and, indeed, quite fluent and faultless, but the dominant language, said to be that in which one thinks and dreams, and usually acquired and developed in early childhood, will always have supremacy. Linguists distinguish two kinds of bilingualism : one where both languages are learnt at home in pre-school days, resulting in an in-bred duality of 'natural' thought processes and expression, and where, a 'double-image of the world' occurs (converging or at variance); the other where there is a time gap between learning one

language and the other (or others) (cf. H Baetens Beardsmore, *Bilingualism : Basic Principles*, 1986, 2nd edn, Avon, England, Multilingual Matters; esp. Ch. 1, for various attempts at definition, and for more types of bilingualism). The first kind is rare, as it is confined to situations where the parents of the child speak two different languages and where each of them insists on speaking only his or her native language with the child. It is rare because the mother usually takes care of the child during the language–acquisition years, so that the child acquires a 'first' language, normally the 'mother tongue' — literally. If the school language is the same as the mother's language, the chances are that the father's language will be only secondary, and, if the father speaks to the mother in her own language, may even grow too weak to be any use to the child. Any change in these circumstances will affect the rivalry between the two languages, leading to the supremacy of one over the other (or others). Terms such as '*natural*' (or '*primary*' — cf. S.H. Houston, 'Bilingualism : naturally acquired bilingualism', *A Survey of Psycholinguistics*, The Hague, Mouton, pp. 203-25) and '*secondary*' have been suggested (Beardsmore, 1986, p. 8). My own experience here is relevant. A cousin of mine was brought up by a Turkish great grandmother who spoke nothing but Turkish to her (or to anyone) while everybody in the family house spoke Arabic. Then she went to a French school and eventually found it easier for her to write in French than in Arabic (or in Turkish). At the Faculty of Medicine the language of study was English. Over the years, Turkish receded, though not totally forgotten, and French became a secondary language, while Arabic gradually improved and finally became dominant. Though she teaches today in English, converses with some

friends in French (rarely in Turkish) my cousin's most genuine linguistic intuitions today are Arabic !

The second kind is the commonest. A bilingual here acquires a second language early enough in his life, but *after* acquiring a 'natural' mother tongue. Some of the 'linguistic material', may be acquired without reference at all to the mother tongue; and they build up and constitute modes of thought competing with other modes in the mother tongue. Switching from one mode (one language) to the other in the course of a conversation, for instance, is natural here as the speaker does not try to translate the acquired material into his or her native language. (cf. J.F. Hamers and M.H.A. Blanc, *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*, 1989, C.U.P., for 'Code Mixing' and 'code switching', p. 35). But other linguistic material is acquired *through translation*. Teaching English in the Arab world sometimes relies on translation, even at the lexical level alone, often with deplorable results. This is sometimes unavoidable, however, and a teacher will find it much easier to tell his pupils that an apple is (تفاحة) than give the dictionary definition or show them an actual apple or a picture of it. One teacher, I remember, insisted on using no Arabic words at all in class, and every time he gave a definition, the pupils whispered to one another possible Arabic equivalents which were often correct but sometimes totally wrong. The tendency to use Arabic equivalents from an early age — a method which had the blessing in my time of the British Education Officer (later called 'Adviser') — saw a whole generation (perhaps more than one generation, in fact) grow up to associate Arabic words with the vocabulary of basic English learnt at the primary school. One such 'Adviser' was the famous Michael West, the author of the '*Readers*' (a series of English teaching books graded from 1 to 6 to

cover the whole English language course up to the pre-GCE level) which had so-called "*Arabic Companions*". These were little books containing the Arabic equivalents of all the 'new' words to which the pupil was introduced at each stage. They together formed a kind of mini-dictionary which established unbreakable bonds in the minds of the young between English words and their given Arabic equivalents. It was obviously an exercise in translation done at the most dangerous level — the lexical. For the best part of his early language-learning period, the pupil would unconsciously associate English words with the given Arabic ones, while hardly any attempt was made to teach idioms or to teach the student how to use the newly learnt words in different contexts. A student's early knowledge of English would therefore be necessarily fragmentary and wholly dependent on single lexical items unrelated to the living context to which these items naturally belong. Even at the most rudimentary level, a student could hardly distinguish a box from a trunk or a chest because the ready Arabic word for all of them would be (صندوق) ; or a fork from a prong (شوكة) a spade from a shovel (جاروف) a pick-axe from a muttock (فأس) shears from scissors (مقص) and so on. The difficulty is understandable here, as young Arab boys and girls may never have seen such 'tools', but the problem assumes grave proportions when the words have abstract meanings or have subtle differences not easily recognizable with reference to Arabic. For 'anger' the pupil would have the Arabic (غضب) and would be hard put to it if asked to distinguish 'anger' from 'fury', 'rage' or 'wrath'. As a translator, having studied English at a specialized level, the adult may well be able to establish the precise senses of these words, but the early link between (غضب) and 'anger' will automatically drive him or her to use that English word — even if the context suggests only

'irritation', 'vexation' or simply being upset ! A semantic distortion is sure to follow, calling in question any linguistic intuition claimed by the learner of English or the translator in later years. But this is not the whole story. For just as the lack of a contextual approach is to blame for such semantic distortion as occurs today in the use of English by Arab learners and translators, another no less important factor is the tendency in teaching to refer to the logic of Arabic (said to be a 'logical' language, though logic and language are not always the best of friends). Arabic grammarians have painstakingly tried to justify any illogicality in terms of 'gaps', presuming the existence of a perfect logic for every expression and idiom, though the contradictions continue to baffle the most astute logician. The institution of illusory 'gaps' and rules of ellipsis has produced loads of artificial 'grammars' which are impossible to learn, and which continue to be controversial even among the grammarians themselves ! The implications of this for the Arab learner of English and translator have been considerable : he or she would want a logical justification for every deviation from the 'rules' and would hardly accept 'pure idioms' as 'correct' or 'normal'. Poetic language uses 'poetic licence', and only in terms of poetic licence would the learner accept Milton's 'All is not lost' or Shakespeare's 'most unkindest cut of all'. These would be regarded as flashes of inspiration acceptable only in poetry, never in prose. The Arab learner's intuition, though quite sound in his or her native Arabic, would fail to absorb the illogicality of English, a living and perpetually changing language. The following process has been noticed in confronting Milton's phrase : my class, many of them in fact, put it first into Arabic (لم يضع كل شىء / لم نفـقد كل شىء) then back into English, claiming it should be 'Not everything has been lost' or 'not all is lost'. With the

Shakespearean phrase they thought that 'most' was added 'for emphasis'. This reminded me of my early days in London, back in 1965 when, still trying to settle down linguistically, I heard the chambermaid in the students' hostel say 'Oh, it may come in useful !' and thought she was being ungrammatical. When I read, a few days later, on the table-salt container 'To improve the free-running qualities of this salt an amount of sodium bicarbonate has been added', I thought that the logical 'qualities' of the English language had been taxed in the extreme. That the salt should have qualities was easy enough to comprehend, but that such qualities should run freely was less easy to accept. Perhaps, I argued, if the singular had been used instead of the plural – with 'quality' replacing 'qualities', – the sentence could have made better sense. 'Free-running' was only one quality, I thought, and the sentence could thus mean 'to improve the quality of free-running which this salt has ...' I had not at the time acquired the basic linguistic intuition which would have enabled me to uncover the hidden 'logic' of the statement. With the benefit of hindsight, I can now state that my fault lay in applying the rules of Arabic logic. I may have translated the sentence, perhaps unconsciously, into Arabic — wrongly. If I had the 'right' intuition then, I may have realized that the translation would be the equivalent of 'to improve the qualities which make for the free-running of this salt ...' Over the years, I made a point of accepting what I heard and read — in the workplace and marketplace, in the media and in books — so as to liberate my mind of the early school habits.

The acquisition of an adequately sound linguistic intuition when learning a foreign language is a long and arduous process. But it is, to a certain extent, possible. Artistic intuition is a totally different matter. If

the translator, once he or she can claim to have acquired the minimal linguistic intuition required in a credible bilingual, can rely on intuition, the literary translator must be able to prove that he or she possesses a talent not so essential to the run-of-the-mill translator. Sensitivity to the style is, of course, important to the translator of both prose and poetry; but in the translation of verse, one has to take into account other features of the text which require specific skills. Lexical equations and the logical approach have to be abandoned in all cases, of course; but here 'creative intuition' is required as well. But what is intuition ? Let us zoom in on that difficult concept.

(iii)
What is intuition ?

A dictionary definition, however inadequate, must be a good start. Intuition is, we are told, the 'direct knowing or learning of something without the conscious use of reasoning' (Webster). The Oxford Dictionary describes this as a power. 'Intuitionism', as a philosophical doctrine, deals exclusively with such 'power' in epistemology; and the term has maintained this position until the 1990s (cf. "Husserl on intuition" in *The Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supplementary vol. 1994). Dictionaries of literary terms do not include it, and most discussions of the creative process steer clear of that 'mystery'. But as used in the New Criticism, as has been mentioned, intuition seems to imply not the passive ability for learning (or knowledge) but the positive power to reach into mysterious areas of experience and, in a flash, reveal an expected thing – an image, a thought, a truth. It is used as a power analogous to creative insight. It is thought of as the power responsible for metaphor, for the unique sense of structure found in

great poetry, and for the deep-level sense of organization governing conflict in drama and narration in the novel. Most of this the critics ascribe to training and relate to tradition, but certain instances are too individual and too unique to be explained in terms of their components or to be traced to specific sources. As the creative process is, by definition, a field of modern psychology, critics have made excursions into the new science, and psychologists have been more than generous with interpretations, many said to be based on properly controlled experiments. The main problem has always been the impossibility of 'controlling' the sources or the 'material' of the writer's intuition. Too many questions will be asked and, often enough, very few will be answered (even wrongly). Starting from the text, the psychologist may have his hypotheses ready, with the established theories to back them up, marshal his assumptions (and presumptions) venture one interpretation after another, then in all probability fail to account for the poet's intuitions, from the theme of the poem to the phraseology and the metre. The psychoanalyst who concluded from *The Prelude*, a literary autobiography in blank verse, that the poet, William Wordsworth, had committed a murder, and the critic who concluded from the 'Lucy' poems that the same poet harboured an illicit passion for his sister, are only two examples of the deplorable results of trying to account for the poet's intuitions in terms of ready-made psychological theories. The fact is no one can state with precision how a poet's intuition works, if only because our knowledge of the 'material' will always be inadequate. For apart from the 'life' material, the biographical data, there is the literary material which is, of course, linguistic and composed of what the poet had read (too varied to specify with certainty) and what the poet had heard (unknown). To this must be

added that catalyst (the poet's mind) which determines the choice and the fusion of both kinds of material. A critic analysing Wordsworth's so-called 'sublime epitaph' ('A Slumber did my spirit seal ...') may not have to tell us why the poet initially 'intuited' the theme of a dead girl, but he or she will have to tell us how the poetic intuition of death has turned it, paradoxically, into a new *kind* of life. In other words, the critic may still have to plumb the depths of the poetic experience in order to establish the central intuition : he or she may use biographical material, literary sources and any other available facts so as to explain the intuition as reflected in the *performance* (i.e. the text). Not surprisingly, most critics shy away from analysing anybody's intuitions : in despair they would cry, 'well, why seek logical explanations for something that is by definition illogical ?' Indeed, the modern tendency in textual criticism is to REVERSE the process — instead of seeking the intuition of the writer (which may be too elusive, at any rate) the critic now tries to give his or her own intuitions *as occasioned by the text.* And reader-response criticism was born.

(iv)
Intuition in reader-response criticism

The new area is no less challenging. Behind it lies the frustration felt by most modern critics in trying to capture the original intuitions : now they have a text — a record of the assumed intuitions but, more importantly, an occasion for expressiong *their own intuitions.* Bedizened as 'optimal readers', or donning the garb of learning, many set about attacking the entire classical tradition, especially the critical theories that dealt with the creative mind or the creative process. Their destructive (deconstructive) effort was insidiously targeted *inter alia* at

the concept of intuition, though many of the proponents of the modern critical theory have, ironically, found a whole new field in which to air their own intuitions. Whether as ideal, optimal or implied readers, they could now relate certain aspects of a given text to culture (variously defined) and society. The focus shifted, almost surreptitiously, from the author-text nexus to the text-reader interaction. The literature of the past should be re-read, many insisted, and re-interpretations must be produced; a revolution was afoot; though, plagued with too many contradictions, it soon led to chaos. It had been easy enough to destroy — to turn every written text into a discourse, variously defined as a system of thought (Foucault) and as a verbal construct, and so examine its relation to the reader at a given moment and in a given society. Now linguists and sociologists were joining hands to unravel the complexities of the 'discouse of power' and to reveal how the privileged classes and the male of the species had dominated our literary history, east and west. But the central contradiction which accounts more than anything else for the chaos was the theoretical attack on *logocentrism*, whilst upholding it in practice. The fault lies too deep, in this connection, as it relates to the fact that each modernist attack on intuition (and theories of inspiration) has so far relied on intuition, the only change being that instead of us having the author's intuition we now have the reader's. And critical intuitions will proliferate indefinitely.

(v)
The Translator's 'Options'

The implications of this attack on intuition for the translator have been astounding. Linked through theories of influence and

intertextuality to Comparative Literature, translation has been regarded as a virgin field for 'discourse analysis' and the rate of producing books on translation has increased with an unusual consistency. From Hatim & Mason's *Discourse and the Translator* of 1990 (Longman's), the Routledge series on Translation in the mid-1990s, to Christian Nord's *Functional Translation* (1997) and the recent (1998) books by Venuti, no less than 300 'good' books have been published mainly in English, but also in German, Spanish and Arabic. Very few, if any, dealt with the translator's intuition. The reason is not hard to find : most of the authors are NOT practising translators, and those who are would like to formalize their intuitions either to help others, by sparing them the trouble of relying on intuition (always hazardous) or to pretend that their approach is 'scientific' and has no room for such a non-measurable, non-formalizable factor as intuition.

My contention is, however, that every translator must rely on intuition and that the translator's intuition is explorable, with definite conclusions to be profitably drawn from such exploration. The interpreter, who quickly provides Arabic equivalents for the English sentences he hears from his booth at an international conference, is a prime example of intuition at work : pressed for time and guided only by personal experience, the interpreter produces 'functional' translations at speed, modifying the regular verbal moulds to suit every situation. A comparison has been made of such modifications, which Reiss and Vermere (cf. Nord's *Functional Translation*, London, 1997) attribute to *Skopostheorie*, and the variety of linguistic responses available — in the form of translations / interpretings of a few single sentences in German and English, though not in any other language. The verbal moulds or linguistic responses have been called options, an

inaccurate term which should now be reconsidered. Strictly speaking, to talk of an option is to suggest the presence of alternatives available ***to the same translator***, so that the interpreter is able to choose another word or phrase in Arabic for the same English word whether occurring in the same context or in a different context or situation. This is not so, in practice, for the different choices or options are used by different trnaslators, even if the English word occurs in the same context or situation. Different interpreters, in other words, produce different versions, which suggests that the factor that determines the choice is individual, not contextual or situational. And the individual choice may thus be assumed to be governed by individual intuitions. Now consider how the following Arabic text has been done into English by three differnet eminent Arab interpreters at a recent conference :

* أقول فيما يختص بالعولة إنها تتناقض مع الهوية الثقافية للشعوب ، وأنا لا أعترض عليها بل نرجو أن نأخذها بحذر .

One translator gave the following literal–sounding translation to which nobody, while we prepared the minutes of the meeting, objected:

a) Let me say that, as far as globalism is concerned, it runs counter to the cultural identity of peoples. I don't object to it, but hope we take it cautiously.

Half way through the transcription of the verbatim report, another interpreter who was checking the translation for 'accuracy' suggested that the above version be changed into a more formal style which he said would better suit the occasion and be more truthful to what the man said. His proposed version was :

b) As for globalization, I argue that it is in contradiction with the cultural identity of peoples. Though not opposed to it, I hope we approach it with caution.

The full transcription of the Arabic text was brought in, after the stenographers had done it in long hand. The superviser was in two minds about this 'improved' version and called in a third interpreter and asked her to translate it at leisure. She was an excellent translator who did interpreting only occasionally and, having attended the session from beginning to end, said that neither version was satisfactory. She proposed a different version for inclusion in the 'formal' verbatim report as both official and final :

c) I contend that globalization is opposed to the independent cultural identities of nations. We're not against it, but should hopefully exercise caution in adopting it.

By a curious coincidence the speaker, an eminent adviser to an Arab head of state with a perfect command of English, came into the room to enquire about the Arabic transcription of his 'interventions'. The supervisor thought it would be an act of courtesy to ask him to judge which of the three versions was close enough to what he had said in Arabic. The man looked baffled : he paused and examined each of the versions then, in his typically suave manner, said the first one was his favourite. Having included all versions in my notebook, I asked him why he preferred it, though it appeared too literal or, at least, not as highly wrought and articulate as the second or the third. His answer was an eye-opener : the first, he said, relied on *intuition* alone : "it responded to my meaning spontaneously; it is what I would've said had I been speaking in English !" he concluded.

It is necessary, I believe, to reprint the three versions to show how the intuition which captured the immediate meaning of the speaker, even his uncertain phrasing, was followed by the deliberate effort at interpretation which turned the statement into a different construction where better denotation served only to blur the 'intended' meaning — a strange paradox :

a) Let me say that, as far as globalism is concerned, it runs counter to the cultural identity of peoples. I don't object to it, but hope we take it cautiously. (30 words)

b) As for globalization, I argue that it is in contradiction with the cultural identity of peoples. Though not opposed to it, I hope we approach it with caution.
(28 words)

c) I contend that globalization is opposed to the independent cultural identities of nations. We're not against it, but should hopefully exercise caution in adopting it.
(25 words)

Amazingly, the fewer words of the last version contain more 'ideas' than those of the first or the second. The uncertain meaning of 'take it' (understand / approach / accept / adopt etc) is the closest to the original Arabic; 'peoples' is closer to the Arabic text than 'nations' as there may be peoples not constituting nations in the strict sense of the word, like the indigenous peoples of North America. The addition of the adjective 'independent' in the third version does not help either; for what the speaker had in mind is obviously 'groups', be they in the form of whole nations or populations characterised by a cultural identity of their

own, independent or otherwise. Another departure from the original Arabic concerns the change in the last two versions of 'globalism' into 'globalization'. The Arabic word may mean either, but the latter term may refer to any 'generalization' or 'comprehensiveness' (as is found in the Globalized System of Preferences which has recently been replaced with 'Generalized System of Preferences' with the same abbreviation – GSP). This may be the reason why the speaker opted for the first version as closer to his meaning; for, though the word has not yet been included in any standard dictionary, it has come to indicate only the tendency to regard the world as one unit, interrelated and interconnected.

(vi)
Intuition and Options

The last version may have appealed to the author of the statement because it appeared to him to be as close as he had hoped to the original Arabic, but the opinion of the author is not always available nor can it be relied on at all times as a criterion for judging the intuition of the translator. Surely the other two versions are acceptable as faithful renderings of the original Arabic and as relying equally on intuition. Consider the opening verb (أقول) and its various English versions. It can be rendered, without violence to the original sense as :

1. What I say is that ... (I say)
2. Let me state that ... (I state)
3. My argument is that .... (I argue)
4. My contention is that ... (I contend)

— all of which are echoed in the three versions, and are perfectly idiomatic. In each case the translator tried to 'intuit' a sense that seemed to fit the context; and in each case the translator produced a slightly different verbal construct. Now consider the following contexts in which the Arabic verb is used and how the context alone *does not* determine the form of the English version, even though it does help to specify the particular sense in which it is used :

١- كان المصمودي يقول بالرجعة ، ويغالي في دعواه الشيعية ، وكان الحسن لا يرى ذلك ويقول إن المصمودي خرج على الجماعة .

1-a) Al-Masmudi believed that the Imam would come back one day, and went to extremes in his Shi'ite doctrine. Al-Hasan disagreed and thought that Al-Masmudi did not accept the opinions of the group (the sect / the majority of Shi'ites).

1-b) Al-Masmudi advocated the view that the Imam would return and was an extremist Shi'ite. Al-Hasan held a different opinion, claiming that Al-Masmudi was a Shi'ite dissenter.

1-c) Though Al-Masmudi accepted the view that the Imam would return and went to extremes in upholding Shi'ite views, Al-Hasan would not agree and in fact thought that Al-Masmudi was not a true Shi'ite.

The movement is from the literal to the interpretative : but all three versions replace the Arabic 'say' with other terms with more precise meanings. None is, in fact, wrong; and the context allows the variety of formulas offered, the decisive factor being the *right intuition of the*

translator in each case. Can there be a criterion, however tentative, for judging the validity of a given translator's intuition ? In documentary translation, to which belong all the examples given above, only the *intended meaning*, as far as it may be ascertained, can be relied on. The source text (ST) is therefore given the function of presenting the intended meaning, explicitly or implicitly, to which the judge of intuition in translation may resort. It is to be regarded, in other words, as the only available formula for the meaning : and to be able to read it properly, the translator has to be in full command of the ST language which may in Arabic have an extra diachronic dimension. Regular methods of semantic analysis, such as componential analysis, (decomposition) may help in the process of verification and, ultimately, judgment. But, as has been said, all the three English versions of the Arabic statement share the same sense; none departs from the presumed intended meaning, but is still different. Their differences cannot be attributed, therefore, to any differences in intuiting the meaning, but to differences in putting the intuited sense into words — a process of expression requiring a special kind of creative intuition. And it is this that may be studied, analysed and measured with accuracy as the target language text becomes a record of the individual translator's creative intuition. Just to realize how creative intuition does not depend on the sense of the words of the ST alone, we may compare the first version which preserves the structural rationale of the Arabic text with the last one which changes the rationale by establishing an internal logical link between the two parts of the ST. The change is, in fact, more than structural; for the last version contrasts the attitude of Al-Masmudi with what another Shi'ite authority thought of him. The link thus established changes the focus of the text by delaying what in the translation

becomes the main clause. The change of focus is not simply a change in emphasis but in *significance*, a product of the creative intuition of the documentary translator. And this is the crucial factor in literary translation.

(vii)
The problem with verse

Nowhere can intuition be observed at work in literary translation more clearly than in the translation of verse. Even verse may, of course, be regarded as discourse and be subject to the conditions of documentary translation; but by its very nature, verse is a very special kind of discourse, as rhythm and rhyme impose a kind of external form which no translator may disregard, even if doing the verse into prose. English metres are generally less restrictive than their Arabic counterparts, and the English rhyme schemes are generally much more varied. Indeed, blank verse has no rhyme at all and, since the Christabel metre, which Coleridge claimed to have introduced early in the nineteenth century, the stress rhythm of old English has been revived and has given the modernists, led by T.S. Eliot, greater rhythmical variety than ever before. But the feature that distinguishes English verse much more clearly from Arabic verse is compression. Economy of expression is a well known ideal in English rhetoric, no less than in Arabic. In fact Arabic boasts a feature that had characterized classical languages, namely ellipsis which makes for unrivalled economy. Part of the inimitability of the Quran may be due to this feature which, in conjunction with internal music, makes it impossible to translate adequately into any other language. But the language of Arabic verse is different and economy is definitely not a feature. If anything, it is the

opposite of economy that may be found in the long tradition of Arabic verse. The reason is said to be the oral nature of the early Arabic tradition, hence the need to be profuse, to resort to repetition with variation (a musical principle) and to make use of the romantic poetic principle of 'repeated attacks'.

Let us therefore examine a few verses from the Quran where the economy of expression is coupled with a kind of internal music only discernible to those familiar with Arabic prosody :

﴿ وقيل يا أرض ابلعى ماءك ويا سماء أقلعى وغيض الماء وقضى الأمر
واستوت على الجودى وقيل بُعداً للقوم الظالمين ﴾ (سورة هود - ٤٤)

The words may be divided, according to the internal rhythms used, into seven parts, where two base beats are used with extra syllables thought by the exegesists to be intended to break the monotony, thereby subverting any regular rhythmical reading. Here is the division :

وقيل يا أرض ابلعى
[ماءك]
ويا سماء أقلعى
[و] غيض الماء وقضى الأمر
[واستوت على الجودى]
وقيل بُعداً
للقوم الظا [لمين]

The first, third and sixth parts belong to the *rajaz* metre, the closest rhythm to that of prose, while the fourth, except for the initial [و] belongs to the *khabab*, a metre not believed to have been held in high esteem by the elder Arabic poets. In fact, it is thought of as a 'modern' metre, not as one of the established metres of classical poetry. The 'monotony breakers' have been put between square brackets and as the

reader of the Quran will not stop at a rhyme word or pay any attention to such a division, the lines will sound fully in prose. Quranic commentators point out that this is all deliberate, for God would not have muslims think of their holy book as poetry — considering the flights of fancy associated with poets and their freedom from being committed to what they say, or, in short, the fact they are allowed in their verse to depart from the truth. Similarly, when a whole line of verse is found in the Quran, one is struck by a slight change in the transcription (based on a change in the reading as revealed to the Prophet) which breaks the metre and turns the line into prose. In verse 13 of Sura Sabaa (*Sheba*) occurs the closest approximation to such a line of verse :

« وجِفَانٍ كالجوابِ وقُدورٍ راسيات »

The omission of the 'y' (ياء) that should have been attached to the 'b' (البـاء) in the second word prevents the line from belonging to a standard metre (a *ramal*). With the exception of the following full line, which is apparently in the same metre —

﴿ لن تنالوا البر حتى تنفقوا مما تحبون ﴾ (آل عمران - ٩١)

one will not find a complete distich in the Quran, but only monostichs or parts thereof; and even in the above line, the final consonant somehow detracts from the regular rhythm and mars the beat. Elsewhere in the Quran will be found many instances of the incomplete metrical structures, mainly in the *rajaz* metre, commonly believed to be of an inferior position as far as the rhythm of verse is concerned, considering its close proximity to the rhythms of the spoken language. In Surat *Al-Haaqqah* we have a clear example of this in verses 19-20 :

﴿ فيقول هاؤم اقرءوا كتابيه ، إنى ظننت أنى ملاق حسابيه ﴾

The extra letter at the beginning of the first verse prevents the rhythm from becoming a regular metre (a full monostich); and there are two extra syllables in the second which perform the same function — the 't' in ظننتُ and the 'q' in ملاقٍ (pronounced *qin*). This is why a poet had to rephrase the verse before including it in a recent poem, as though to suggest a simple case of intertextuality (or the use of verbal echoes) :

أقول هاكم اقرءوا كتابيه
إني ظننت أنني
ألقى غداً حسابيه

Although allowed 'officially', the purists are averse to this practice because of the need to respect the fact that the Quran is in prose. Sometimes, however, certain verses are rhythmical, such as the following two verses from Surat *Al-Borouj* :

﴿ النار ذات الوقود ، إذ هم عليها قعود ﴾ (٥-٦)

but the commentators point out that the different vowels following the final 'd' in the rhyme words detract from the regularity of *al-mujtath* — the composite metre suggested by the rhythm. To omit such vowels, they insist, is not allowed. The fact is, however, that we do have verbal music in the Quran, discussed, repeatedly and at length, in the standard commentaries, *with the accent on its being internal rather than external.* For external music requires not economy but expatiation and, often enough, redundancies. It has even been suggested that redundancies are essential for the music of the verse to be well-established. In good poetry there are, of course, fewer redundancies than in the regular verses of our tradition. Consider an older line in a composite metre (*al-khafeef*) :

إن أتيتَ الديارَ يوماً فسلِّم
كيفَ أنتِ يا ديارُ سلاماً

which simply means : 'if one day you pass by the (deserted) home (of the beloved) convey my greetings to it'. The second monostich is almost totally redundant : it may be rendered as follows "... greetings / And say how are you 'old home'." The final سلاما may be an absolute object مفعول مطلق and may refer to the verb and would thus be a kind of intensifier. The line may be read differently, of course, so as to make it mean either 'convey a real / warm etc greeting' or :

> "If one day you visit the home (of my departed love) convey my greetings to it ! How are you (now that my sweetheart has left, I wonder !) Peace be upon you ! (i.e. farewell !)"

This is obviously full of interpretation, as the accretions to the original words show (included between brackets). Whichever way one reads the line, the ellipsis will be found to vanish in the external music of the rhythm. In other words, one is carried forward by the music of the metre and hardly has time to pause to consider any omissions or — which is more important — any redundancies. Consider now a modern poet with a rare gift for external music.

يا لائمي في هواه والهوى قدر
لو شفّك الوجد لم تعذل ولم تلم

The metre here is composite again (*al-baseet*) but consists of four compound units, repeated through the distich. Shawqi's meaning is obvious :

> "O you who blame me for loving her, though love is predestined, if you had known the pangs of love, you would not have blamed me !"

Here we have a repetition, with slight variations, of 'love' and 'blame' (تلم / تعـذل / لائمى → الوجد / الـهوى / هواه) but the essence of the rhythm is the repeated long vowels (seven) in the first monostich (ä, ä, ë, ë, ä, ö, ä) and the repeated stops on seven consonants in the second (ف - ل - ج - م - ع - ل - م) . The vocative mood of the first monostich calls for such long-drawn vowels, it is said, while the diminuendo of 'submission' in the second calls for the abruptness of the stops. As the poet does this, of course, intuitively — almost instinctively in the case of Shawqi — the translator has to find out for himself or herself how it may be echoed in English — a Herculean task ! Let us zoom in, then, on a specimen of modern rhythm-dominated verse :

أيهـذا الشـاكى وما بـك داء
كيـف تبـدو إذا غـدوت عليـلاً
إن شر الجناة فى الأرض نفس
تتوقى قبـل الرحيـل الرحيـلا

The meaning of the words (the 'prose sense') may come out plainly in any paraphrase : 'do not, for fear of death, look sickly though you're healthy, otherwise you'd be a sinner'. The idea is clear enough and could be variously expressed 'How could you complain, with no ailment to justify it, to the point of looking physically ill ?! The worst transgressor in this world is he who's afraid of departure long before the moment of actual departure arrives'. Elia Abu Madi, the poet who, again intuitively, produced a masterpiece of harmony relying on the balance of long-drawn vowels (for the vocative mood) and a perfect

combination of consonants, must have cared more for the genuine Arabic music than for the 'message' itself. Consider then the equally 'musical' rendering :

> O friend ! Why must you moan and groan
> Though suffering no affliction ?
> Why should you look so pale and wan
> When no offence is worse in man
> Than fearing death in anticipation ?

How does the intuition of the translator work here ? The use of idioms in the translation (collocations) creates an air of a 'goodly company' with texts in the target language (TL) and involves a direct reference to a line in a famous poem (why pale and wan, fond lover ?) The 'goodly company' means that a change has occurred in the position of both speaker and audience — a basic intuitive act. Now the audience becomes an English reader, and the initial 'O Friend !' is added to the text not only to indicate that the addressee is singular, but also to confirm the air of familiarity (the reference is to Wordsworth where the expression is only too common). The metre is iambic (four tetrameters followed by a pentameter) with a perfectly calculated rhyme scheme. Without adequately responding to the original Arabic, the source text (ST), the translator could never have managed to strike the balance between intuitive interpretation and intuitive expression — or the unity required in any act of artistic intuition. The crucial factor in all this is therefore the change in position, for the changed audience requires the translator to assume the position of the author of the source text, and exercise his or her intuition as the writer of an English poem. Does intuition work differently in doing English verse into Arabic ?

(viii)
Basic Assumptions

For the translator of verse to exercise intuition as defined above he or she must be assumed to have overcome the impediments of lexical limitation, discussed in the 'Personal note' above, and the logic-oriented approach to language. Intuition in reception requires the ability to assimilate a given English text before any actual translation is done. Just as the above translated version of Abu Madi's lines allowed for a variety of possible equivalents for the Arabic الجناة the Arabic translator should have at his command a variety of possible equivalents for the lexical and structural features of the English text. The 'final' version of Abu Madi's lines adopts 'offence' in preference to 'sin' and 'transgression'; though the Arabic word can suggest any number of possible equivalents. In legal parlance the Arabic جناية is a felony (as distinguished from a misdemeanour) but the Arabic verb يجنى على could mean 'to do someone an injustice', 'to wrong / ruin someone' and a host of other meanings. The choice of 'offence' now relies not on a 'correct' interpretation of the Arabic word only, but also on the availability of English options. The Arabic literary translator must therefore be equally assumed to have as many options, *lexically and structurally, as are necessary for his intuition to be properly exercised.* Lexical limitation is no doubt the first enemy to be fought and, for those Arabic translators who may not have overcome this limitation, relying on intuition alone may be counterproductive.

Let us have initially an example of how freedom from lexical and structural limitation works. The famous 'Rainbow' lines used by

Wordsworth as an introduction to his "Ode : Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" should do :

My heart leaps up when I behold
    A rainbow in the sky :
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man
So be it when I shall grow old
    Or let me die !
The child is father of the man
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

Being bound to the common Arabic equivalent in our tradition for the rainbow (قوس الغمام) as it occurs in (ابن الرومى) for instance, or either of the available alternatives (قوس قزح and قوس المطر) could restrict the lexical options of the translator. All three should be equally *operative* in the translator's mind for any meaningful options to be considered. The idiom 'leaps up' has no ready equivalent in Arabic; but there must be also options in compound forms : يهتز ضاحكاً ← يرقص طرباً ← يتواثب فرحاً ← يطير فرحاً ← يخفق فرحاً though the verb (يطير) in Arabic can imply 'fear' in different compounds (طار قلبه شـعاعاً) and by itself can be ambiguous as in the famous line

عوى الذئب فاستأنست بالذئب إذ عوى
وصـــوّت إنســـان فـكدت أطـــــير

The third of the above versions has been used by a former student of mine (Zuhair Al-Bayyomi) according to Professor M.S. Farid, though I have not seen his translation. 'So was it' is a structural problem : in

documentary translation it can be rendered (هكذا كان شأنى) or (هكذا كان الحال) though the translator here seeks more *choices*. 'When my life began' can give (فى مطلع الحياة) or (فى بواكير الصبا) or, indeed (فى الطفولة) . The hardest nut to crack is 'natural piety', of course, as critics are not as yet agreed on a definite 'sense' (not to say 'meaning'). Is it the piety, conceived in traditional terms, inspired by Nature ? Is it 'piety' *towards* Nature, that is, insofar as one sees in Nature the power of God's creation ? An unlikely reading, however, is that 'natural' should mean 'normal' or 'according to the nature of man'.

Intuition, though most immediately at work in the 'spontaneous' effort of the interpreter, is equally at work in the arduous task of writing or translating in verse. It can best be exercised when there are *real options*, that is, lexical and structural alternatives available to the poet or the translator. Regardless of the time the translator may spend in considering these alternatives, the real factor that determines the exercise of his or her intuition is whether there *are* alternatives. In practice, however, the choice may depend on the other features of verse (metre and rhyme). I draw here on personal experience as a translator of verse for more than forty years. The following abortive attempt at translating the lines, done in 1957, reveals the danger of fascination with 'jingles' – the overpowering lilt of the words :

قلبى يتواثب فى صدرى
إن لاح لنا قوس المطر
قد كنت كذلك فى مطلع عمرى . . . الخ

Lexical limitation had still affected the choices, and the 'almost artificial' regularity of the Arabic metre – *al-khabab* (alternatively *al-muhdath* or

al-mutadarak). Now see how the options have changed with a change in outlook, though not necessarily 'maturer' or even 'better' :

مازال قلبى يستخفُّهُ الفَرَحْ
إذا رأيتُ فى السما قوسَ قزحْ
قد كان ذاك حالى فى طفولتى
وما يزال فى رجولتى
وليته يظل فى شيخوختى
أو فَلأَمُتّ !
الطفل والد الرجل
ولى من الدنيا أمل
أن يربط الأيامَ حبل دائمٌ لا ينقطع
من كل ما توحى به هذى الطبيعة من ورع

Lexical limitation is confined to 'the child is father of the man' as the phrase has become almost proverbial, allowing hardly any room for manoeuvre. Two cases of metrical 'licence' in Arabic occur in lines 3 and 10 (but more of this later).

Amazingly, the choices, in practice, are quite limited. For, as we have seen, a given interpretation of the source text (ST) forces the translator to opt for a range of options controlled by that interpretation. There is no such thing as an 'easy' poem or, of course, a 'simple' poem. Wordsworth's little poem may have shown us how even the apparently 'simple' vocabulary can be far from simple (ct. Danby, ***The Simple Wordsworth***) and its translation far from 'easy'. A sonnet may serve to show that the form forces the poet to make certain choices which are not necessarily those of the translator, for he has a prescribed metre and a definite number of lines, and he can hardly break free from the confines of the rhyme scheme chosen. The choices thus made are

sometimes dictated by the form chosen, apart, of course, from the literary tradition to which he belongs and the audience he is addressing. Not so the translator, who is not forced to adopt a form that does not exist in his or her literary tradition and which may not be appreciated by his or her audience. Insofar as the object of the translation effort is to present to the Arab reader an Arabic version which may pass for a poem, however defined, the translated version should possess only those aspects of form conducive to this. The metre and rhyme need not, therefore, correspond to the ST, and the external form need have nothing at all to do with the ST form, the assumption being that the reader will not have seen the ST. The translator may thus appear to have even greater choices than that of the poet with regard to external form, and it may appear too that *immediate* intuition, which we may call *Primary Intuition* can be relied on solely in making the necessary choices. Free from lexical limitation, as well as from ST restrictions, the translator may appear to have a simple creative power working for him — Primary Intuition — which should alone decide which external form to choose, and which metre and rhyme to opt for. And Primary Intuition does work for the translator, though this is not the whole story. For Primary Intuition can be, or can seem unsatisfactory, and the translator may start again, using what I may describe as Secondary Intuition. For, again in practice, *lexical limitation always (or almost always) controls Primary intuition.* In Secondary Intuition the translator may make a deliberate effort at freeing himself or herself from lexical limitation, giving his or her mind the time required for the assimilation of the 'tone' of the ST and the choice of a form best suited, *from the translator's individual viewpoint*, to transmit it in Arabic. Here is an

example — a sixteenth century sonnet by Samuel Daniel, often anthologized and regarded as 'representative' :

> Care-charmer sleep, son of the sable night,
> Brother to death, in silent darkness born,
> Relieve my languish, and restore the light,
> With dark forgetting of my cares return.
> And let the day be time enough to mourn
> The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth;
> Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
> Without the torment of the night untruth.
> Cease, dreams, the images of day desires,
> To model forth the passions of the morrow;
> Never let rising sun approve you liars,
> To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
> Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain
> And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

Though sixteenth-century specialists label it a 'love poem', with emphasis on key words like 'ill-adventured youth', 'scorn', 'desires' and 'passions' (Rosemond Tuve is one such critic), a modern critic may show more interest in the paradox of light and darkness – how the 'dark' power can engender 'light', and how the Elizabethan mind worked in contrarieties. Grierson's argument that 'still' does not signal a 'reversal' but simply means 'always' is plausible enough, though the line of thought would not rule out the 'reversal'. A modern reader will no doubt regard the sonnet as somehow strident in tone, with typical sixteenth century hyperboles and verbosity; but the Arabic ear will not reject it. Primary Intuition may produce the strangely lilting :

يا نومُ أيا من تقهر بالسحر الهمّا
يا ابن الليل الأسود وأخا الموت
يا من تولد فى صمت الظلمات
أقبل خفّف كربى وأعد لى نور البسمات . . . الخ

But Secondary Intuition may choose a different metre and, with it, a more controlled rhyme scheme, with variations which relate the Arabic version to the Arabic romanticists of the Apollo School (of the 1930s and 1940s)

أيها النوم الذى يقهر كالسحر الهموم
يا ابن ليل أسود اللون بهيم
يا أخا الموت الذى يولد فى صمت الظلام
خفف الأحزان عنى وانشر الضوء العميم
عُدْ فأنسى كل كربٍ فى دجى الليل الحميم
وليكن طولُ النهار كافياً لأندب الخراب
إذ تحطمت سفينة الشباب فى وسط العباب
وليكن فى الصحو ما يكفى لتبكى يا عيونى
محنة الهجر الذى أذكى شجونى
دون تعذيب الليالى بالظنون
ولتكُفِّى يا رؤى الأحلام يا صورة أشواق النهار الغارب
لا تصوغى أى أشواق الغد المأمول صوغ الكاذب
لا تضيفى أى أحزان إلى همّى بزيْفك
وليكن فى مشرق الشمس غداً تكذيب حيْفك
ليت أن النوم يطوينى وإن دار المدار
حاضناً سحب الهباء
دون أن أصحو فألقى ما ألاقى بالنهار
من عذاب الازدراء !

The distinction between Primary and Secondary Intuition is modelled more on that made by C.S. Lewis between primary and secondary epic than on Coleridge's distinction between primary and secondary imagination : it simply refers to order in time. Whenever reference is made to intuition in the translation of verse, it is to secondary not to primary intuition. The latter is invariably exercised by those translators who are eager to preserve the 'tone' of the ST in the Arabic version produced, which requires time in the assimilation of the ST tone and its subsequent reproduction. The idea first occurred to me when I examined Wordsworth's translations of Latin authors (Juvenal and Propertius) and the 'try out' versions attributed to Primary Intuition. When he translated Michelangelo into English, he seemed to have repeatedly changed his mind, as he later did in revising the 1805 text of *The Prelude*. Changes in the poet's text need not, however, be attributed to a conscious desire to 'write it up' but rather to the so-called 'incubation' period during which the poem 'grows' on the poet, so to speak, and almost forces him or her to introduce the changes experienced internally. A similar process has been observed in the translation of verse; and whenever intuition is mentioned without qualification in the rest of this essay Secondary Intuition is meant.

One of the tests used in measuring the role of intuition in the choice of an Arabic metre to 'suit' the 'tone' of the English poem is the poetic 'situation' suggested by the ST which may recall a poem or a comparable 'poetic situation' in the TL. This will be examined later, though previously touched upon in my *Comparative Moments*, Cairo, 1996; but an examination of some of the eminent translations of verse *into verse* has shown that another factor may be at work even at the level of Primary Intuition, namely that some poets and translators show

a distinct preference for certain metres, regardless of the 'tone' of the ST and regardless of any comparable poetic situations in the TL. Professor Zakhir Ghibrial, a distinguished poet and verse translator invariably opts for the *ramal* beat. The only translation from the French in Ahmad Shawqi's *Poetical Works* is in the *hazaj*; my own most immediate impulse is the modest *rajaz*, the least 'poetical' of the three, and I put my name next to these great translators in all due humility. The three above-mentioned metres are 'brothers', as will later be shown, and their beats overlap inevitably. The only credible criterion for judging the role of intuition here may therefore be the individual experience of the translator and I hope to be allowed therefore to draw on my own experience. As a young man I had translated the opening stanza of Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode' into verse, and the Arabic lines had lived with me long enough to make me feel, almost subliminally, that the lines belong 'naturally' to the *ramal* beat :

مر من عمرى زمان يوم كان الجدول الرقراق يبدو
والخمائل والمراعى بل ومألوف المناظر
قد كساها الله ثوباً من بهاء
فتراءت فى جلال مثل حلم ناضر عذب الرواء
لم يعد ذلك حالى وانقضى
والذى شاهدت إذ ذاك مضى
حيثما يممت وجهى كى أرى
فى نهار الكون أو ليل البشر
ما توارى عن عيونى واندثر !

The English text should have been given first :

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth and every common sight,

To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it has been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things I have once seen I now can see no more.

Going back to the Arabic text in 1999, I tried to bring the lines closer to the original English but found that every amendment came out in *rajaz* ! I had naturally to work hard to assimilate the *ramal* beat without being confined to the wording of the early version. I remembered here what Ahmad Shawqi had said about training one's ear to accept and echo a given beat; it was instructive, I thought, and wondered whether what I remembered was right about T.S. Eliot's 'auditory imagination'. Somewhere in his prose works he talks about the music of verse haunting the ear even before the actual writing begins. But Shawqi's words are worth quoting, even in part :

[قال صاحب « الفتح القسّى فى الفتح القدسى » بعد كلام « فانظروا إلى إيوان كسرى وسينية البحترى فى وصفه ، تجدوا الإيوان وقد خَرَتْ شَفَعَاتُه ، وعُفِّرتْ شُرُفاتُه ، وتجدوا سينية البحترى قد بقى بها كسرى فى ديوانه أضعاف ما بقى شخصه فى إيوانه » وهذه السينية هى التى يقول فى مطلعها :

صُنْتُ نفسى عما يُدنّسُ نفسى

وترفّعْتُ عن جَدَى كل جِبْسِ . . .

فكنت كلما وقفت بحجر ، أو أطَفْتُ بأثر ، تمثّلْتُ بأبياتها . . . ثم جعلتُ أروضُ القولَ على هذا الرويّ وأعالجُه على هذا الوزن حتى نَظَمْتُ

هذه القافية المهلهلة ، وأتممتُ هذه الكلمة الريِّضة وهذه هى :

اختلافُ النهارِ والليلِ يُنْسى　　　اذكرا لى الصّبا وأيامَ أُنسى . . . }

(*الشوقيات* - القاهرة - ١٩٦١ ، ج٢ ، ص٤٤)

Here is a 'documentary' translation, with the added explanatory words included in brackets, :

> The author of *Al-Fath Al-Qissi fi Al-Fath Al-Qudsi* [i.e. Al-Imad Al-Asphahani, The author of *The Qis-like Literary Conquest, on the Conquest of Jerusalem*] proceeds to say : 'Look at the royal palace of Emperor Khusrua (of Persia at the time of Prophet Muhamed's birth) and the poem describing it which Al-Buhturi indited, with the single rhyme letter 'S'. In the poem you should find the palace with the spires fallen and the terraces in a state of disrepair. Al-Buhturi's poem, in fact, has preserved much more of Emperor Khusrua in the *Poetical Works* than all the relics of the Emperor's person in his palace.' The poem referred to is the one with the following opening :
>
> > I have shielded myself from all disgrace
> > Being too proud to receive gifts from a sordid source.
>
> So, whenever I stopped to look at a stone (in the ruins of Andalusia) or passed by a monument, I recited the lines of Al-Buhturi's poem ... I then started to compose verses in the same metre and with the same rhyme letter until I managed to produce the following 'threadbare.' rhyme, and to complete the following imperfect poem. This is it :

The succession of nights and days
Makes for forgetfulness;
So recall my youthful days
And all their happiness !

This is Secondary Intuition par excellence ! For here is a major poet who admits that he worked deliberately to imitate the rhythm and the rhyme of another poet. The subject here may belong to Comparative Literature, or the modish 'intertextuality'. But so does translation ! The life-experience of Shawqi in Andalusia recalled a *poetic experience* hailed by a historian critic, though too rhetorical for our modern tastes, to the point of forcing Shawqi to recite the lines of Al-Buhturi, having learned them by heart, as the only possible medium of expressing his twentieth century *life experience*. His Secondary Intuition would have no other medium but that metre. How comparable the whole process was, I wondered, to that of the translator who is guided by Secondary Intuition to a rhythm and a rhyme scheme suggested by the tradition ! Working along the same lines, I managed to produce a different translation, still in the same metre, which seemed to me closer to the original English :

كنت فى يوم من الأيام أرنو للخمائلْ
أو أشاهد المروج والجداولْ
بل وهذى الأرض والمألوف من شتى المناظر
فأرى نور السماء فوقها كالثوب باهر
أو كحلم ذى رواء غامر الأضواء ناضر
قد مضى ذلك عنى واستدارا
حيثما نظرت أو سعيت ليلاً أو نهاراً
فالذى شاهدت يوماً قد تلاشى وتوارى

The modulations sometimes betray a predilection for *rajaz* as the penultimate line shows. I left this version overnight and in the morning tried again, this time letting my intuition alone work. The result is the following version :

قد كنت يوماً أشهد الغدير والمروج والخميلة
والأرض بل وكل ما اعتدناه من مشاهد الطبيعة
وقد توشحت بنور باهر من السماء
كأنه رؤيا منام ناضر عذب الرواء
لكن ذلك انقضى
قد كان عهداً ومضى
فالآن حيثما يممت وجهى
وحيثما نظرت ليلاً أو نهاراً
وجدت أن ما رأيته من قبل قد توارى !

Perhaps a final brevity by the same poet, used as an introduction to the second part of his 'Hart-Leap Well', should establish such a preference :

The moving accident is not my trade,
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts,
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts

الحادث المثير ليس صنعتى
وأن أجمِّد الدماء فى العروق ليس فى يدى
لكننى أروم متعتى
إذا أظلتنى ظلال الصيف وحدى
فى عزف لحن ساذجٍ لكل قلب يهتدى

I cannot say, precisely, what makes one poet opt for a given metre; in doing Shakespearean plays into Arabic, I found I was using even compound metres, particularly in *The Merchant of Venice* and in *King Lear*; and the mystery persists.

(ix)
The role of rhythm interpreted

So much for the first assumption : the second concerns the expectation that the translator of verse can assess the role of rhythm and rhyme in the Source Text (ST), even if he opts for a prose translation of the lines. He or she must be assumed to recognize a rhyme word used for the sake of rhyme (rare in good poetry) or a change in metrical structure occasioned by a change of mood or of 'tone'. Far from being a tall order, this is an essential requirement in the translator of poetry, whether it is done into verse or into prose. Let us consider a short poem by Robert Graves, cited in M.S. Farid's article 'The Love Poetry of Robert Graves' (*Cairo Studies in English*, 1999) :

> With you for mast and sail and flag,
> And anchor never known to drag,
> Death's narrow but oppressive sea
> Looks not unnavigable to me.

The words of Professor Farid should be an adequate comment on the lines; I shall quote his commentary in full :

> The poem is one sustained conceit that is very much in the fashion of the seventeenth century (i.e. the metaphysical and Cavalier poets). As someone has remarked, a poem like this is sufficient to secure Graves a place in the final poetic

> pantheon. Martin Seymour-Smith concludes his monograph on Graves with the words : 'with such unforgettable fragments as 'The Narrow Sea ... he has reached a technical perfection that has not been surpassed in the language'. (p. 112)

It is the 'technical perfection' that concerns us here, consisting not only in the metaphysical conceit but in the perfect rhythm and rhyme, *and* the economy. The Arabic translator is bound to echo the technical feature, above all the 'sea image' which is unfamiliar to the Arab reader. And he or she must note the difficulty of the word 'narrow', as it obviously recalls Coleridge's 'wide, wide sea' as well as the Biblical 'narrow gate' (or 'narrow path' — the 'straight and narrow'). The 'but' of the third line tips the balance in favour of the first allusion, but the word does suggest a crossing rather than a free sailing. Above all, the Arabic translator must produce the kind of rhythm only creative intuition can provide, complete with a corresponding Arabic rhyme scheme :

إن كنتِ ساريةَ السفينةْ
شراعَها والرايةَ الأمينةْ
وكنتِ مرساةً لها من دأبها الثبات والسكينةْ
فإن بحر الموت ليس شاسعاً طويلا
حتى ولو ران على النفس ثقيلا
وليس يبدو لى العبور مستحيلا

The last line has been substituted for a possible interpretation, a little less accurate, namely :

ولا أرى الإبحار فيه مستحيلا

Some of the additions in the Arabic version are essential, as the Arabic السارية by itself can be too ambiguous; but others are added for the sake

of rhyme, as rhyme in the English text is central. Only three Arabic words have been, in fact, added for this purpose which seems to me a very worthy purpose indeed. The objection that they may be omitted without loss to the *sense* is answered by the fact that the *meaning* will lose much : for the meaning is the sum total of the sense and the technical features of the lines, mainly the rhythm and the rhyme. For the original 24 words (32 syllables) we have 30 odd words in Arabic, and for the four lines we have six, but a unified rhyme for each of the two parts of the conceit. Economy must go overboard *almost always*, as the more the translator reads in the source text, the more eager he or she will be to convey the full force of the *meaning* as defined above.

The third assumption is closely linked up with the second, namely that the translator of verse must be able to distinguish the 'tone' in order to allow his intuition to adopt a comparable 'tone' in Arabic. Consider the vocabulary of the following poem by Robert Graves, described by Professor Farid as 'one of his most poignant shorter lyrics' :

> Since now I dare not ask
> Any gift from you, or gentle task,
> Or lover's promise – nor yet refuse
> Whatever I can give and you can dare choose –
> Have pity on us both : choose well
> On this sharp ridge dividing death from hell.
>
> (*Op.Cit.*, p. 118)

The careful wording has an almost 'legal' character : no poem of comparable length would include so many modal auxiliaries with meanings too specific for the 'usual' love poetry. Consider the

sequence : dare not / any / or / or / nor yet / can / and finally 'can dare', which brings the 'argument' to the double imperative 'Have pity – choose well', before the climax is reached in the 'poignant' *Sharp ridge dividing death from hell*'. The poignancy is due to the fact that the phrasing is ambiguous : for if the poet says he is between two fires, one is left with the impression that he is not sure which of the two is less painful. Indeed, death can refer to life without love, as much as hell can; and the discursive progress of the thought in the first four lines leaves the choice open. The 'poignancy' is also due to the irony in 'choose well'; for however 'well' she may choose, a sense of doom hovers over the conclusion. This is the crux of the poem's meaning, to which contribute all the technical features of the verse. Syntactically, the poem owes its cohesion to the single thought presented in one sentence, alive as it is with interruptions and resumptions. The following translation reflects the central structure, with less emphasis on rhyme, though still in verse and the same number of lines :

ما دُمّتُ لا أَجرؤُ أن أطلبَ منكِ الآنْ
هديةً ولا مهمةً رقيقةً أو عهدَ حبْ
حتى ولا أن أحجبْ
ما أستطيعه مهما تجاسَرَ اختيارُكْ
فأشفقى على كلينا .. أحسنى اختيارَ مطلبكْ
ونحن فوقَ حافةٍ دقيقةٍ تفصلُ بين الموتِ والجحيمْ

The number of words is even less in the Arabic version, but this is all incidental to the precise wording. The corresponding sequence here is

لا أجرؤ / ولا / أو / ولا / مهما تجاسر /

culminating in the imperative (فاشفقي → أحسني) with the added (ونحن) required by the 'sense' in Arabic, as the translator now assumes the position of an Arab poet addressing an Arab audience.

The third assumption, concerning the intuitional preservation of 'tone' can be better understood if a poem belonging to a totally different tradition is approached. Let us go once again to Wordsworth, the exponent of English romantic poetry. Here are the first few lines of a poem about his wife :

> She was a phantom of delight
> When first she gleamed upon my sight
> A lovely apparition sent
> To be a moment's ornament
> Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
> Like twilight, too, her dusky hair.
> But all things else about her drawn
> From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
> A dancing shape, an image gay,
> To haunt, to startle and way-lay.

The key words here are phantom, apparition, shape and image — a sequence proceeding from the 'airy nothingness' of the spirit to the substantial image of the body. The typical 'intermediate imagery' of Wordsworth speaks for itself : twilight and dusk, which is deliberately contrasted with dawn and May-time. The metre, though regular, is unusual : couplets are normally iambic pentameters, but here we have couplets of iambic tetrameters, which hightens the tempo a little. The main feature of the style, though, is the near total absence of any operative verbs (apart from 'gleamed' and the final infinitives). Not a bad performance, you'd say, by a poet 'ordered' by his sister to write a

poem about his wife ! But the waving rhythmical movement of the verse calls for another metre than the *rajaz*, perhaps a cousin, even a brother, like the *ramal* ? The difference is in fact hardly noticeable when metric modulations are cut down to a minimum. Here is the difference which the Arab reader will immediately recognize :

قل يا حبيبى أين أنت الآن قل (رجز)

يا حبيبى أين أنت الآن قل لى (رمل)

The scanning (تقطيع) of the lines will show that they belong to the same pattern, for if you omit the initial (قل) from the *rajaz* it turns into *ramal*; a third brother of the two is the *hazaj* which occurs when you omit the initial (يا) from the *ramal* :

حبيبى أين أنت الآن قل لى يا { حبيبى } (هزج)

The attraction of the *rajaz* for the translator, however, is due to the fact that it allows practically more modulations than either of the other two. But the *ramal* is suggested by the fact that in the Arabic tradition we have the formula (كان شيئاً) associated with similar, even identical proclamations :

كان صبحاً فى عيونى حين ولى
فى عيون الناس صبح العالمينا

She gleamed on my eyes like a new morn
When morning light had from all eyes gone !

Or the most memorable :

كان فجراً باسماً فى مُقْلَتَيَّا يوم أشرقت من الغيب عَلَيَّا

A smiling dawn in my eyes shone
When sun-like you rose from th' unknown !

The final 'Unknown' implies the 'Unseen' or the 'Beyond' ('the great beyond' is the '*undiscovered* country from whose bourn / No traveller returns' in Shakespeare). The implication is that 'she' is 'sent' from the Beyond to this world — an act of violating the laws of nature ! The main point is, however, structural : for here we have an established Arabic pattern in the *ramal* metre, with a reference to the beloved as 'he', rather than she, in consonance with a deep-rooted poetic idiom :

كان بدراً ساطعاً فى ناظريّا
رصـع الخضـراء بالدر جليّا

She gleamed on my sight, a shining full moon,
With gems the empyrean to adorn.

In the light of such a tradition, the poet's intuition is easily analysable : the following Arabic version shows the workings of a mind that draws on an already rich tradition :

كان طيفاً هلَّ بالفرح عليّا
عندما لاح السنا فى ناظريّا
طيف حسن من وراء الغيب مرسل
رصع اللحظة بالدُّرِّ جليّا
مقلتاها فى جمال نجمتين
تسطعان فى الأفق
شعرها مثل الشفق
لونه من الغسق
ماعدا ذاك لديها مستقى من الربيع
وابتسامة السحر
قل خيال راقص حولك
صورة ذات مراح تسكنك
فتنة قد تتربص . . أو تفاجئك !

If the mysteries of poetic intuition remain largely unexplorable, the mysteries of creative intuition in translation may be explained in the light of the previous assumptions. The extra three lines are not in effect real additions; for a single line may be divided, deliberately, for the sake of rhythm or rhyme into two or three in the target language version. The main point caught by the translator's intuition here is the progress from the 'phantom' idea to the 'image' of a real person.

Nothing can prove this, more convincingly than the following rendering of a famous poem by Browning :

OH, to be in England
Now that April is there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree hole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England — now !

ياليت أنى كنت فى انجلترا
الآن إذ حل الربيع
وكل من يصحو بانجلترا
فى أى صبح بديع
ودون أن يدرى يرى
أدق أفنان على الأشجار
وحزمة الهشيم حول دوحة الدردار
قد أورقت براعماً صغار
بينا يغنى طائر الحسون فى البستان
على الأغصان
هناك فى انجلترا - الآن !

The number of words is almost the same in the English and Arabic versions (46 and 47 respectively) but the lines are divided differently and the rhyme schemes are different. The change of April to الربيع is required by cultural considerations, a change which brought in an extra word for the rhyme (بديع) . Otherwise the translation is almost literal, but it is still in verse.

In other instances, the translator may manage to convey the central poetic meaning, directly and almost effortlessly intuited, in the Arabic version, in more or less the same number of words. With an extra effort, through 'Secondary Intuition', a genuine Arabic version may be produced, enjoying the 'goodly company' of comparable poems written originally in Arabic if the translator could capture the right metre for the versified version. Here is a poem by W.B. Yeats — characterized by the strict economy of modern poetry and the sharp irony of the moderns :

How can I, that girl standing there,
My attention fix
On Roman or on Russian
Or on Spanish politics
Yet here's a travelled man that knows
What he talks about
And there's a politician
That has read and thought
And maybe what they say is true
Of war and war's alarms
But O that I were young again
And held her in my arms !

I hardly need to point out that the rhyme scheme is irregular, just as the metric structure is. Intuitively the translator knows that the opposite of economy is required : for the elliptical English style cannot be done into an equally elliptical Arabic style, *as the rules of ellipsis are different* in Arabic and English. Still, if a successful version in Arabic is to be produced, a measure of economy is required, reflected at least in the number of lines :

ألا كيف ينصبُّ فكرى
وتلك الفتاة قبالة بصرى
على مشكلات السياسة فى أى قطر !
سياسات روما وروسيا وإِسبَانِيَا !
وإن كان ذاك الخطيب خبيراً بها
وكم جاب آفاقها
وذاك السياسىُّ يعرف ما فى الصحائفِ
فذُّ القريحة وقّادُها !
أقول وقد يصدق الراويان بشأن القتالِ
وإطلال حرب بأوزارها
ولكن عينى سبتها الفتاة
فياليتنى عدت شاباً ليهنأ صدرى بأحضانها !

The metre (*al-mutaqaareb*) is suggested by Shawqi's poetry — especially :

نجـا وتمـاثـل ربانـها   ودق البشائر ركبانها

and

جعلت حلاها وتمثالها   عيون القوافى وأمثالها

Though this is far from essential, it is what the translator intuitively produces. Alternatively the rhyme scheme would be more responsive to that of the English version, as in the case of the following poem by Shelley. It is a stanza from his 'Dedication' to *The Revolt of Islam*, addressed to his wife :

And what art thou ? I know, but dare not speak
Time may interpret to his silent years
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek
And in the light thine ample forehead wears
And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears
And through thine eyes, even in thy soul I see
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

This is obviously a Spenserian stanza, with a final hexameter, and meticulous attention to metrical and rhyme regularity. The question of rhyme, no less than that of rhythm, depends more on intuition than on any conscious 'design'. Note how the initial and final rhymes correspond intuitively to the source text, with the 'middle' rhymes 'acting' in harmony :

وماذا تكونين ؟ أعرف لكنْ لسانى سجينْ
فليت الزمان تولّى الحديثَ فبدَّد صمتَ السنين
ولكننى أسمع الهمس فى فكر وجنتك الشاحبة
وفى نور جبهتك العالية
وفى أعذب البسمات وفى العبراتِ

ورقة ألفاظك الحانيةْ
فهمسُ النُّبوءة يطمسُ كل مخاوفىَ الساذجة
ومن كوّة المقلتين أرى داخل النفس نوراً
ومصباح ضوء تَوَقَّدَ فى القلب ناراً طهوراً

The processes of interpretation and rendering have inevitably revealed conflicts difficult to smooth out in the usual 'rational' way of reading prose; verse seems to have the power of *mythos* working at all times in conjunction with that of *logos*. Each of the above poems seems to have a *mythos* all its own, described as the logic of emotion or of the spirit, which may render 'logical' interpretation difficult. It is the special 'system' we find in Wordsworth and Shelley, described by them as 'the thinking heart' and the 'feeling intellect', respectively. Just how it works in practice is difficult to ascertain insofar as we rely in all critical analysis on *logos* to the exclusion of *mythos*; but the translator is not an analytical critic, and he or she may handle that system intuitively — that is, through secondary intuition, as defined above.

Taking an image, a central image from Wordsworth, as a test case, we may explore the processes referred to above as they take place; and we may make use of 'dissemination' as the deconstructive principle that may help, paradoxically, resolve the conflict between the conventional opposition of heart and mind.The following sections will therefore be a practical exercise in unravelling the mysteries of the *creative* translation processes.

(x)
Limits of Interpretation in Secondary Intuition

> Visionary Power
> Attends upon the motions of the wind
> Embodied in the mystery of words;
> There darkness makes abode, and all the rest
> Of shadowy things do work their changes there
> Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, 1805, V, 619-23

It was Wordsworth who, bewildered by the inability of language to capture the feeling that overwhelmed him when he realized that he had already crossed the Alps, exclaimed :

> Imagination – here the power so called
> Through sad incompetence of human speech,
> That awful power rose from the mind's abyss
> Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
> At once, some loney traveller. I was lost;
> Halted without an effort to break through;
> *The Prelude*, 1850, VI, 592-997

The second line, an accretion to the 1850 text, sums up the point : in 1805 the poet was sure enough of the ability of language to capture whatever feelings or ideas he wanted to express and simply said :

> Imagination ! lifting up itself,
> Before the eye and progress of my song
> Like an unfathered vapour; here that power,
> In all the light of its endowments, came
> Athwart me; I was lost as in a cloud,
> Halted, without an effort to break through,
> *The Prelude*, 1805, VI, 525-530



In 1805 he had definite ideas about the ability of "human speech" to channel each and every feeling, to articulate even the most abstruse idea, and was certainly consistent, in both theory and practice. He trusted the "common language" used in everyday life, or so he claimed; for as the passage quoted from the 1805 *Prelude* (hereafter referred to as the A text) shows, his faith was confined to the lexical aspect of language only. We now know that Book VI was written some time between 1803 and 1805 (possibly nearer the first date) when he had completed *Peter Bell*, a ballad that testifies to the faith he had in the "common language" of people – with its predominantly Anglo-Saxon diction and pleonasms – and before he went again into print with his *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807). But the recourse to figurative language in the cited lines from the A text shows that his faith in the "common language" of men had already been shaken : there is a metaphor or a simile in every line, sometimes mixed (line 526) and occasionally vague (528). The words are indeed "common", but the use made of them (that is, at the 'pragmatic' level) shows that the poet on longer believed that the language of prose and the language of verse were essentially the same. Lexical identity was not enough to establish linguistic identity : and the poet eventually recognized that more emphasis ought to be given to his dictum that the poet should use a "selection" from the language actually spoken by men; more importantly, he now recognized, as he revised his personal epic, that even such a "selection", alive with metaphors and similes, could not adequately express, not to say communicate, his original vision. In the revision he smoothed out the inconsistencies in the mixed metaphor, removed the hackneyed "light of endowments", refined the terms ("with scientific accuracy", as Hartman has shown) of the power of

imagination, but still believed that the name he gave to that "awful power" was inadequate, and so had to apologize for the inadequacy by lamenting the "sad incompetence of human speech". He may have had "common speech" in mind; he may have had the concept of Coleridge's "Primary Imagination" in mind, so similar to Pascal's famous "ego vir videns" but the purport of the text is that language – "human speech", or as the linguists prefer to call it, after the French, "discourse" – can never be adequate. And it has been this inadequacy that started the English deconstructivist critics on their endless excursions into meaning, or the interminably changing, possible or potential meanings of literary texts.

(xi)
The Lure of Deconstruction

No one can claim that deconstruction is alive and well, especially since the death of Paul de Man; as a philosophy, it must be in the throes of death. The powerful arguments advanced by John Ellis give it little hope of recovery. But to the translator it has an ever-living fascination. How can one resist reading Wordsworth deconstructively if intuition is to produce any worthwhile results ? Let us see what deconstruction can offer the translator from within the body of the Wordsworthian text.

A reader of the above quoted lines from the 1850 ***Prelude*** will not miss the general image of what Wordsworth calls the imagination : a sudden cloud or vapour (fog) engulfing the lone traveller, rising, as it were from the depth of his mind. So much for the "sensuous" image; which is not in fact, purely "sensory", as the metaphor of the mind shows. However, the problem of interpretation really begins with the confrontation with the key word in this famous passage – power ! What can it mean ?

A hasty translator, or a beginner, will certainly come up with the common Arabic equivalent – *Quwwah* قوّة , alternatively force or strength. More thought will lead the interpreter to the equally common, though closer to the contextual meaning, *Taqah* طاقة , alternatively energy. Which will he or she opt for ? Still, going through the text of the *Prelude*, especially the *contemporary* drafts which were later rejected or modified, the translator will come across an array of other meanings which he or she will be ill-advised to ignore. In the course of the poem itself he or she will, naturally, encounter the regular meaning of the word, as strength, though linked up here with "Aeolian visitations" (A.I. 95), with the capacity for writing verse (A.I. 199 and 239) and will even come across a coinage, "underpowers", which the OED records as the first instance of such a compound. The other uses of power pertain equally to the mind of man and the "soul" of nature. Wordsworth's most explicit attribution of "souls" to natural objects, interpreted by R.D. Havens in his *The Mind of a Poet* as an early belief in animism, occurs in MS. V.:

> Ye powers of earth, ye genii of the Springs,
> And ye that have your voices in the clouds
> And ye that are familiars of the Lakes
> And standing pools.
>
> I, 409-2, MS, V.

This has been corrected later to

> Ye winds ye voices that are in the clouds
> Ye visions of the mountains and ye souls
> Of lonely places

but the lines, rejected in MS. U where a blank exists, were further modified to :

> Ye Presences of Nature, in the sky
> Or on the earth ! Ye visions of the hills !
> And souls of lonely places !

The animism implied is, however, only an illusion : it is only a metaphoric way of referring to the soul that enlivens all existence, whether attributed to single objects, as in :

> a huge cliff
> As if with voluntary power instinct
> Upreared its head
>
> A.I. 406-408

> Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
> To breathe an elevated mood, by form
> Or image unprofaned
>
> A.II. 324-326

> Oh ! ye rocks and streams
> And that still Spirit of the evening air !
>
> A.II. 139-140

or given in metaphoric expressions as "Beings" or "Spirits" (the "presences" of the previously quoted lines)

> there are Spirits which, ...
> do open out the clouds
> As at the touch of lightning, seeking him
> With gentle visitation, quiet powers !
>
> A.I. 351-72 MS. V.

Ah ! not in vain, ye Beings of the hills
And ye that walk the woods and open heaths
By moon or starlight

A.I. 428-33 MS.V.

But consider the different :

And not alone
In grandeur and in tumult, but no less
In humbler scenes, that Universal power
And fitness in the latent qualities
And essences of things, by which the mind
Is mov'd by feelings of delight, to me
Came strengthen'd with a superadded power,
A virtue not their own.

A.II. 341-348 MS.V.

"Power" in the penultimate line was later replaced by "soul" perhaps to avoid repetition, perhaps to avert the clumsy "Strengthen'd by ... a power", but the fact that it *can* be replaced by *soul* is significant. And the spiritual implication, no doubt attributable to the traditional religious formula ('the power and the glory') is directly given in Book II :

but scarcely Spenser's self
Could have more tranquil visions in his youth ...
Of human forms and superhuman powers
Than I beheld ...

A. VI. 104-105, 107-108

Such a 'holy power' may be found to reside as much within the *mind* of man as in the *life* of nature. As 'an agent of the one great

mind', the mind of man has such an innate power – the capacity for creation. It is creation here in the sense of Coleridge's primary not secondary imagination : it is the power of consciousness itself :

> For feeling has imparted thought and power
> Of animation for his opening mind
> That like an agent of the one great mind
> Creates
>
> MS D^3 of A.II. 255-8

Though the lines were later changed to :

> Such feelings pass into torpid life
> Like an awakening breeze, and his mind
> Even [in the first trial of its powers]
> Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
> In one appearance, all the elements
> And parts of the same object, else detach'd
> And loth to coalesce
>
> A.II. 244-250

The breeze becomes the symbol of the creative power, and the image, as noted by Abrams in his 'The Corresponding Breeze' (*English Romantic Poets*), is common to all the Romantics. The crucial passage which unequivocally establishes the metaphor occurs in the preamble to the *Prelude* :

> For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven
> Was blowing on my body, felt within
> A corresponding mild creative breeze,
> A vital breeze ...

'Tis a power
That does not come unrecogniz'd, ...

I. 41-44, 47-48

Elsewhere it is referred to as the 'visionary power' :

Thence did I drink the visionary power

A. II. 330

Visionary power
Attends upon the motions of the winds
Embodied in the mystery of words.

A. I. 619-621

Is the power described as the imagination, 'through sad incompetence of human speech', to be easily identified, therefore, with the 'primary imagination' ? The temptation is too great, and one may be inclined to rush to describe it as the 'power of creation' (alternatively the 'creative power') or the power of consciousness, and, in both cases the word قوة plus a genitival modifier (الابداع / الخلق or الوعى) may be called for. But consider the rest of the famous passage :

Imagination ! lifting up itself 525
Before the eye and progress of my Song
Like an unfather'd vapour; here that power,
In all the might of its endowments, came
Athwart me; I was lost as in a cloud,
Halted, without a struggle to break through. 530
And now recovering, to my soul I say
I recognize thy glory; in such strength
Of usurpation, in such visitings

Of awful promise, when the light of sense
Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us 535
The invisible world, does Greatness make abode.
There harbours whether we be young or old.
Our destiny, our nature, and our home
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die, 540
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be.
The mind beneath such banners militant
Thinks not of spoils or trophies, nor of aught
That may attest its prowess, blest in thoughts 545
That are their own perfection and reward,
Strong in itself, and in the access of joy
Which hides it like the overflowing Nile.

A. VI. 525-548

What we have here is obviously an external power, or a power made external through the metaphor of the world's *mind*. Hartman's 'halted traveller' is jerked into a sudden awareness not of the power of his own imagination but of a power which his imagination could not capture. Neither his creative power nor his power of consciousness could save him from the sense of loss he now experienced when faced by the imaginative power of nature, otherwise referred to as 'infinitude'. Words like 'might' (الجبروت perhaps) and glory (السناء / النور / البهاء / or, the traditional المجد) reinforce the common nouns crowding in to build up a crescendo – 'light', 'flashes', 'invisible world', 'greatness', 'destiny', 'nature', 'hope', 'effort', 'expectation', 'desire', 'prowess', 'perfection', 'reward' and, finally – 'joy' !

Why can we not think of power as 'authority' سلطة or سلطان ? This is perhaps owing to the fact that it is only Satan who accuses God of having defeated him with 'might' rather than 'right' ! In *Paradise Lost* Milton portrays Satan as a fallen angel not only because he disobeyed God, but also because he misunderstood the whole polemic : in so far as Satan believes that God defeated him with his 'thunder' and 'strong arm', Satan reveals an evil faith in physical power; he fails to recognize that disobedience is defeated because it is *wrong* and *therefore* weak. For an act of disobedience to your creator is a rebellion against your own nature – an unnautral act, very much like Lear's daughters' ingratitude ! The word 'authority' has come to acquire unpleasant connotations in Arabic because of a long tradition of autocratic rule and absolutism. The power Wordsworth speaks of has 'might', but it is the might of the giver العاطى ; it has 'endowments' for man; and is thus 'awful', in the sense of being awe–inspiring : awe is ennobling, fear debasing.

Having said that, we inevitably face the central problem of 'tone'. In the revised 1850 version, Wordsworth tidies up the syntax, providing finite verbs where needed, and modifying the punctuation to avoid unnecessary vagueness (such as the subjectless sentence in line 237). But, even then, the 'tone' is difficult to establish : the poet is 'formally' talking to Coleridge, and the poem had long been referred to, throughout Wordsworth's life at least, as the 'Poem to Coleridge'. Is the 'tone' here the 'conversational tone', so staunchly defended by Coleridge, and consistently advocated by the poet himself ? Certainly not ! Wordsworth, as corroborated by the revised version, is attempting a lofty style, aspiring to the grandeur of the classical epic. The 'Song' of line 226 harks back to 'Sing' of *Paradise Lost*, I, 6; the abstract

terms, such as the string of nouns cited above, are designed to create an air of sublimity, which implies a more general audience than Coleridge or, indeed, his immediate readership. And the high seriousness of the tone has certain implications for the meaning. For, like Milton, Wordsworth relies on the common features of the grand style, fluid syntax and high suggestiveness being the most notable (as Christopher Ricks has shown in his *Milton's Grand Style*). By its very nature, a fluid syntax will pose problems of meaning, hence of interpretation. Is the opening word an apostrophe ? Is it in the vocative case, to use conventional grammatical terms ? Or is it a subject with the verb lost somewhere when the syntax was suspended by the sheer power of the lofty tone ? When the syntax is resumed, we are back on the grammatical track, only to realize the reason for the suspended — resumed syntax — the shock of revelation !

(xii)
Possible Interpretations

The deconstructive approach has helped more or less negatively. As the referential function of the central word is undermined by the near synonyms in the body of the poet's texts, all vying for supremacy but getting in the way of one another, the translator is deprived of the ability to rely on his or her trusty intuition. In fact, our inability to establish one of the various possible meanings as the most likely one places an unexpected burden on the translator. Let us consider some alternative translations of the first six lines, proceeding from the literal to the less literal, then to a verse rendering :

(١) الخيال ! مشرئباً بهامته أمام عين أنشودتى
ومقاطعاً رحلتها مثل بخار لا أب له !
لقد داهمتنى قوته واعترض طريقى
بجبروت شمائله ، فضللت الطريق ،
كانما اكتنفتنى سحابة ، وتوقفت ،
وخار عزمى دون محاولة النفاذ منها !

(٢) وإذا بالخيال يبرز أمام بصرى
بينا أكتب قصيدتى فيقطع علىّ الرحلة
مثل دخان يتيم ! هكذا داهمتنى تلك الطاقة
بمواهبها الجمة الجبارة
ووقفت فى سبيلى ! وأحسست أننى تائه
كأنما غمرتنى سحابة ، وأُوقِفْتُ
وإن لم أبذل أى جهد للخروج منها .

(٣) يَا أيها الخَيَالُ كَيْفَ لاَحَ لِي مُحَيَّاكَ المَهِيبُ شامخاً
أَمَامَ عَيْنِ هَذِهِ القصيدة !
لَقَدْ قَطَعْتَ رِحْلَتِي كَأَنَكَ الضَبَابُ لَمْ يُنْجِبْهُ أَبْ
فَيَا لتلْكَ الطَّاقَة الجَبَّارَة الحَافلَة !
اسْتَوْقَفْتَنِي فوقَفْتْ ، قَدْ كُنْتُ تَائِهاَ كَأَنَّ ديمةً غَمَرَتْنى
وَلَمْ أُحَاوِلُ أَنْ أَشُقَّ لى طَرِيقاً مِنْ خِلالِهَا !

The last, in verse, must seem as farther from the first as can be done by two different interpreters : but both versions are *possible*, and therefore, *legitimate*. The first uses قوة in translating 'power' and, owing to the 'natural' idiom of Arabic and the rules of collocation, a verb has been used to 'go with' the implications of 'force' with the

result that the suggestion may be closer to an ambush, or an armed force surprising an enemy column ! More important, perhaps, is the vagueness of شمائله – which cannot be improved on by supplying any of the synonyms or near synonyms such as خصاله or صفاته or even مواهبه which occur in the second version. The alternative found in the verse rendering, viz. الحافلة , i.e. rich or richly endowed, has the advantage of transferring the meaning to the mind of the poet : for here we can see the imaginative mind (of nature and of the poet) as 'richly endowed' – though the expression is used colloquially in English today to refer to an obviously different thing !

(viii)
The Role of *Ecriture* in Interpretation

Now the possibility of producing different interpretations in the light of one's own reading of a given text, though playing right into the hands of the deconstructivists (if there is any today) is of paramount importance to the literary translator who may be eager to present to the reader as faithful an image (or version) of the original text as he or she can honestly produce. *Skopostheorie* may have liberated the modern translator from the absolute authority of the source text (which has been 'dethroned') but a deconstructive approach will deprive it even of a 'workable interpretation'. There may be nothing 'outside the text', but what *is* in it may be so elusive, so uncertain, that the translator has sometime to throw himself or herself on an interpretation inevitably determined by personal factors. Such factors are found to include his or her individual experience not only of foreign texts but also, and more significantly, of the tradition of his or her native language — hence *écriture*. Couldn't I have said :

يا قوة الوهم التى ارتفعت أمامى واشمخرت

for instance ? or the more relevant to *The Prelude* :

يا أيها الوهم الذى فاجأنى

Naturally, I could not, believing as I do that (الوهم) is reserved for 'fancy'. So much so, in fact, that when I did *The Merchant of Venice* into verse (Cairo, 1988) and came across the lyric

> Tell me where is fancy bred
> Or in the heart or in the head

I did it thus

ما أصل وهم الحب
فى العقل أم فى القلب

I knew well enough that 'fancy' meant love; but more than welcomed one expositor's interpretation that in Shakespeare the word always had a shade of meaning allying it to illusion, the word commonly rendered as وهم ! But why can't we interpret Wordsworth's use of the imagination as closer to وهم than to خيال ? After all, the Arabic خيال could also mean a shadow, a phantom, or a spectre; and the technical term for the Imagination, found in Ibn Khuldoun, for instance, and in Al-Jurjani (*The Prolegomenon* المقدمة and *Definitions* التعريفات , respectively) is المخيلة ! The reason is to be found, in fact, not in any predilection for any specific terms but to the translator's expectations of his *reader*. The translator's choice of words is therefore governed not only by his own interpretation, which may be true or false, but also by what Barthes calls *ecriture*, that is, the linguistic code he shares with his reader, based entirely on literary conventions. It is this *ecriture* which

has produced in the verse rendering an Arabic version that is woven specifically from the threads of Arabic literary traditions. A back translation will show how different it is from the original :

> O imagination ! how your awesome
> Complexion appeared, towering high,
> Before the eye of this poem !

The idea of awesomeness is naturally influenced by a memory of 'awful' in line 534 and the other 'awful' added as an adjective here to the revised 1850 version, but the rest derives from Arabic *ecriture*. The business of interpretation is not, therefore, totally prior to the actual rendering; the *ecriture* does, up to a point, control the interpretation. Indeed, the fact that the verse rendering is more successful, at least as I see it, shows that the Arabic rhythm, entirely peculiar to Arabic and therefore belonging also to *écriture*, has contributed to the interpretation in question. The two prose versions, faithful though they may be, will always stop short of conveying the poetic quality of the original lines.

(xiv)
Intuition and Ecriture

Can we hope to disentangle the threads in the translated text *which relate the interpretation to a reading of the original* from those due to *ecriture* ? Difficult, if not impossible. Believing in practice (and with an ingrained aversion to theory) I shall give a rendering of the first six lines from the 1850 version, first in prose then in verse.

(١) الخيال - الاسْمُ الذى يُطلَقُ هنا على هذه القوة
بسبب العَجْزِ الذى يبعثُ على الأسى فى لُغةِ الإنسان -

برزت تلك القوةُ المهيبةُ من أَغْوارِ العقلِ السحيقةْ
مثل الأبخرةِ التى لا أَبَ لها إذ تكتنفُ
فجأةً مسافراً دونَ رفيق . أصبحتُ تائهاً
إذ استوقِفْتُ دون أن أبذل جهداً للخروج منها

(٢) يا للخيال إنه الاسْمُ الذى نَدْعُو بِهِ
اَلْقُوّة الجَبَّارَة المَهِيبَةْ
لعجز أَلْفاظِ البَشَرَ
عن وَصْفِها عَجْزاً يُثِيرُ الحُزْنَ وَالأَسَى
هَبَّ الخَيالُ فجأةً من أعمقِ الأَغْوارِ فى نَفْسى
كأَنَّهُ الضبَّابُ لم يُنْجبْه أَبْ
ذاك الذى يَغْشى مُسافِراً بلا رفيق
أَحْسَسْتُ أَنىّ تائهٌ . . أنى قد استوُقِفْتْ
بلْ لَمْ أُحاوِلِ الخُروجَ مِنْه .

To begin with, the prose rendering is admittedly 'prosaic' : the 'tone' of the opening line in Arabic strikes the keynote of the whole passage, so that even the trick of avoiding the clumsy العجز الحزين (a regular trick of the trade, in fact) fails to make an impression. The general 'air' of the Arabic prose is close enough to that of the English, with the typical adjective plus noun constructions, though an effort has been made to avert the rigidity of such a stereotyped syntax; but the prose remains, as I said, prose. The interpretation is that of the 'refined' and 'tidied up' revised version, with the 'connectives' ('cohesion markers') clearly relying on a spurious causality : بسبب → إذ → إذ and so confirming the 'prose logic'.

The verse rendering is, on the other hand, immersed in the literary tradition of Arabic. By itself the rhythm forces an Arabic 'beat' which

lulls the reasoning faculties and establishes an auditory pattern comparable, though far from being identical with, the original. It is the beat that carries through, forcefully enough, the emphatic repetitions peculiar to Arabic and establishes the internal organizing pattern of the imagery. It becomes the channel for an 'inner form' which allows other alternatives :

(١) يا لَقُدْرَةَ الخَيَالْ ! ذلك الإسْمُ الذى نَدْعُو به
قُوَّةَ الذِّهْنِ المَهيبةِ التى لا تَستطيعُ أَلْفاظُ البَشَرْ
وَصْفاً لَهَا . . . . . . الخ

(٢) يا لَطَاقَةَ الخَيَال فى أَنْفُسنا ! إنا لَنَدْعُوهُ الخَيَالَ عَجزاً
إذْ يَحَارُ اللَّفْظُ وا أَسفَاهُ فى وَصْفِه
بَلْ يَعْجزُ الإنْسَانُ عنِ بيَانِ قُوَّتهِ المَهيبَةْ !

No genuine Arab ear will fail, I am sure, to recognize the difference. The rhythm becomes itself one important mode of interpretation; it is the corresponding pulse, and the very 'inner life' of the verse which I have described above as 'inner form'. Coleridge must have had the music of verse also in mind, what Wordsworth calls 'the holy life of music and of verse', when he propounded his theory of the 'living form' (*Shakespearean Criticism*, vol. I., p. 204) which later came to be described as 'Organicism' by Brooks and his followers (first introduced in 1948 in an essay on 'Irony and Ironic Verse' in *College English*, IX). The interpretation of the 'poetic meaning' of the lines inevitably involves the rhythm produced afresh in the target language; and, insofar as the translator is capable of reproducing the rhythm as inspired by the target language, the new text will have more affinities with his or her native poetic rhythms than with any rhythms in the original text.

The last translation begins with the *ramal* رَمَل beat, lightly modified to suggest the allied *rajaz* رَجَز beat. For the reader not fully acquainted with the metres of Arabic verse, I shall resume the discussion of Arabic metrics (cf. p. 129 ff. above), by focusing only on these two near identical beats. Let me, therefore, provide examples of each; here is a specimen of the *ramal* :

يا لِنَفْسي ما بِنَفْسي أيُّ بُركان بِنَفْسي يَتَفَجَّرْ

[My Soul ! whatever is within rumbling ?
What a powerful volcano erupting ?]

The first unit يا لنفسى contains 3 syllables (short + long + short or, alternatively, light + heavy + light) if we measure it by the universal system introduced by Sayyid El-Bahrawi in his العروض وإيقاع الشعر العربى (that is, *Prosody and the Rhythm of Arabic Verse*) where he suggests that stress is a universal feature of language and successfully applies it to Arabic verse. Thus, the three syllables of the first unit (or foot تفعيلة) are *ya Lenaf si* which are marked by either long vowels or stops يا لنفْ سىْ where each sign of stop [o] marks the end of the syllable. The whole unit, containing the same number of syllables and letters, is then repeated a fixed number of times in each line in the traditional poem, but freely in modern Arabic verse. Using graphic symbols we may reprèsent it thus u – u. Now you can modify this beat to what I have called the 'allied' *rajaz* beat, by simply adding a short syllable before the line ! A line running :

[L to R.] / u – u / u – u / u – u / u – u / u – u

which is the case with the above-quoted line, can be turned into a *rajaz* beat by adding a short syllable like, say قل ! [which, incidentally, does mean 'say' !] so now it becomes :

[L to R.] / uu – / uu – / uu – / uu – / uu – / u

which is easy to divide into units of three syllables each, with an extra syllable to boot ! No one can claim that the base rhythm has drastically changed : indeed, we are free to regard it, even according to traditional rules of prosody, as still a *ramal* with an extra syllable at the beginning – a modulation recognized by such a famous grammarian as Muhammad Mustafa in his *Ahda Sabeel ila 'Ilmay Al-Khalil* أهدى سبيل إلى علمي الخليل : العروض والقافية that is, *'The Best Guide to the two Sciences established by Al-Khalil' : Metrics and Rhyme.* However, if you decide to omit the initial syllable in the regular ramal beat, to make it :

[L to R.] / – uu / – uu / – uu / – uu / – u

you will get another Arabic metre, equally allied to *ramal* and *rajaz*, namely *Hazaj* or *Waafir*. The same rule applies here, and we hardly need to repeat what has been said. In fact it has been mentioned by Al-Khalil Ibn Ahmad himself, the founder of Arabic prosody, and is hardly novel at all.

What I claim to be novel is the equation of another metre, traditionally regarded as different from *rajaz* and its 'allies', namely *al-Kaamil* الكامل with these three. The key is my suggestion towards the end of the last paragraph that *Hazaj* was an alternative to *Waafir* الوافر . Though an authority on the subject such as professor Amin Ali El-Sayyed has in a recent book (في علمي العروض والقافية) grouped them together as One metre, regarding their base beat as identical, many will be loth to accept this view. The problem is essentially one of interpretation again ! What I have called the 'long stroke' consists in fact of two vowels, one short the other long, such as Kamaa كَمَا which

in the prosodic transcription of Arabic becomes three 'marks', one for the consonant plus the short vowel (ka = كَ) another for the following consonant with the following short vowel (ma = مَ) and a third for the vowel itself [ä = ا] which is naturally regarded as long ! Now if you add another short vowel before this stroke, 'fa' for instance, you will get *fakama ä*, so that the three short vowels are followed by a long one فَ كَ مَ ا ! Would there be much change if the middle short vowel (not the K, being a consonant, was omitted ? *Fak ma ä* فَكْمَا ? Insofar as Arabic verse is quantitative, there should *not* be; but the paradox is that some traditional grammarians insist there is ! My contention is that they have equal values, because the rules of modulation allow the substitution of one for the other in all cases ! I have tried this myself in my verse translations (in practically all of them) and, to quote Wordsworth, 'the report has been chearing'. Indeed, in the following line from the same poet, Abdul-Qadir Al-Qitt, such substitution is made in the *kaamil* metre :

جَفَّ الغَدِيرُ وَصَوَّح الزَّهْرُ   فالآنَ لا سَـــكَنٌ ولا رَوْحُ
لم يبق إلا الفكر والشعـر   وأُســىً أرق حديثـها جُرْحُ

[The pellucid pool is dry,
And withered are the flowers !
No comfort for me today,
No fragrance in the bowers.

Nothing remains but thought and verse,
And solaces which still hurt
Even with the sweetest words !]

This reverse substitution, that is, adding rather than omitting, a short vowel in this unit is 'officially' not allowed in the *rajaz* ! The rule I learnt as a child is that if a single modulation of this kind occurred in the *rajaz* beat, it should be regarded, instantly, as *Kaamil* ! In practice, however, the ear does recognize infinite differences and variations in the *rajaz* base rhythm, often regarded as a 'beast of burden' (literally the jackass of verse حمار الشعر) in the sense of being a factotum ! Consider the following specimen by Al-Hutay'ah (الحطيئة).

الشَّعْرُ صَعْبٌ وطَوِيلٌ سُلَّمُهْ
والشعْرُ لا يَسْطِيعُهُ مَنْ يَظْلِمُهْ
إذَا ارْتَقَى فيهِ الّذِى لاَ يَعْلَمُهْ
زَلَّتْ بِهِ إلى الحَضِيضِ قَدَمُهْ
يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُعْرِبَهُ فَيُعْجِمُهْ

The craft of verse is difficult
The road to the top is long;
No one can be a poet
If he gets the metre wrong !
If the uninitiated attempt
Ignorantly the hard ascent
They will certainly slip
And down to the bottom dip !
Trying to make it accessible
They make it incomprehensible !

With the exception of the second line, which is regular, the base beat in the other four is modified, differently in each line, by one or more of the 'legitimate' modulations.

My last translation of the opening lines, in the *ramal* beat يا لطاقة الخيـال في أنفسنا . . . الخ makes use of all such modulations in the base rhythm suggested by the original lines as *interpreted by the translator*. The five syllables of 'imagination' are interpreted as five long-drawn vowels, with three main a's in the first three words, after which the (i) (in 'fee' في) leads to a modulated foot belonging to the *rajaz* beat ! In other words, one could easily omit في أنفسنا to get a regular though slightly modulated *ramal* :

يا لطاقة الخيال !

[from left to right] : u – * u u – u

Or one could substitute another form of the plural, namely نفوسنا to maintain the *ramal* beat with the same light modulations

يا لطاقة الخيال في نفوسنا

[L to R.] u – * uu – * uu – * uu

Applying the principles explained above, one can read the line as a *rajaz*, with the initial short syllable regarded as an accretion ! Each foot will, however, be modulated by the very feature explained above in *al-Kaamil* : namely the change of (uu) into (–) which is legitimate and called الخبن . The Arabic transcription of prosodic 'letters' gives it thus : from right to left o// ← o/ o/ for which the English equivalent used would be, from left to right : two short syllables equals one long syllable uu = –!

One advantage of allowing for these variations in the structure of the rhythm is that the translator will always be led by his ear in his interpretation of the metre – an ear which must be fully trained on the

authentic tunes of his native tongue. Thus أنفسنا may have been suggested by أنفس – the plural most common in the *Quran* (over 150 times as against only two instances of نفوس as plural); nor can it be regarded as alien to the meaning or in the strictest sense extraneous : it shares the same form and implications of *nafasa* & *nafas* i.e. / breath, the root verb for *tanaffasa*, i.e. to breathe, which owing to the common rule of substitution in Arabic would be a variant of *nafatha*, i.e. to blow, or the synonymous *nafakha*. This should recall Wordsworth's own 'definition' of the creative power (the imagination) in terms of breathing, breath or the breeze (cf. the above quoted lines from the Preamble to The *Prelude*). Divine afflatus is nothing but the wind – the Arabic ريح and روح so that 'the breath of heaven ... blowing ... [engendered] a creative breeze, a vital breeze ... a power, (A.I. 4-44, 47). In this sense, the translator has, perhaps unwittingly, adopted Wordsworth's own concept of the *power* of the imagination. The substitution of the first person plural for the passive voice may be regarded as a common device, but the vital 'human speech' comes later with the full force of the Quranic خلق الإنسان علمه البيان . The two rhyming key words in fact clinch the interpretation of the power of the imagination as a living power, both in nature and in man, here identified with the spirit, as it defies the most quintessentially human faculty, namely speech ! Verbal echoes from the Quran such as ندعوه and وا أسفاه and وصف are too unobtrusive to be observed by the ordinary reader but they establish the idiom of the target language beyond a shadow of doubt. The interpretation of the English text seems, therefore, to be inextricably linked up with the verse form chosen for the translation, and the recasting of the meaning interpreted owes as much to *ecriture* as it owes to an analysis of the line in the light of the original lines. So,

insofar as *ecriture* is the power of texts in the *target language alive in the mind and the ear of the interpreter*, a process of comparison, even at a subliminal level, must be responsible for the intertextuality, a central element in which being the rhythm of the verse. Most of the target language texts (with the exception of the Quran in the case of Arabic) are in verse; and it is in verse that the idiom of literary Arabic is at its most lively and vibrant. Truly intertextual or not, the translated text, if genuinely idiomatic, must bear the vestiges of the target language, complete with rhythm and 'power' ! The rhythm does not only influence the interpretation but is an integral part of the interpreted meaning.

(xv)
How Secondary Intuition Works in Practice

It seems to me only pertinent, having made my point in general terms, to give the reader a version in verse of the full passage quoted above from the 1805 version of *The Prelude* with a modicum of critical comment in the footnotes. I must, however, state at the outset that the critical comments occur to me *not* as I translate but after the translation is done. Naturally I speak only for myself : I am aware of many translators who are capable of fulfilling the twofold task at once. Alas ! I can only do one thing at a time : having assimilated the English text 'not wisely but too well', as Othello says, I begin to speak with a different voice, resisting every temptation to introduce any conscious 'improvements' or, worse still, any embellishments. It is not rare, especially when I have done an Arabic text into English, that I discover that I had forgotten the original. In the case of Arabic, I find that the 'power' of our native language possesses me totally, leaving little room

for discursive reasoning. Mine is a betrayal of the original, but it may be, in one sense at least, a *trahison creatrice*. I believe that the use of secondary intuition, thus analysed, may shed valuable light on the dynamics of translation into Arabic, having confirmed the role of culture in determining the quality of the target text, not only its genealogy and 'character'.

1 (525) يا لَلْخَيال إنّهُ اْشرَأَبَّ فَجْأَةً أمام نَاظِرِى اْ أُنْشُودَتِى

2 أَثْنَاءَ رِحْلَتِى مِثْلَ الضبابِ لاَ ندْرِى مَنِ الذى أَنْجَبهُ

(1) The sentence in English has no finite verb; the gerund has been turned, in my Arabic version, into a finite. The alternatives have been provided earlier in the essay, in the prose renderings. ناظرىَّ, that is, the 'eyes' corresponds to 'eye' in the text; and أنشودة is a relatively new word in Arabic for a poem that is sung, here it stands for the poem, of course.

(2) الضباب (fog or mist) is a free translation of 'vapours', commonly used by Wordsworth to mean mist. Ivor Brown in *Words in Season* equates mist (on account of the common root with moist), with benign, 'rolling vapours' and fog with the evil fine vapour (in the singular) which occludes vision.

'Unfathered' is paraphrased, rather lamely, here as the literaly rendering could imply a prayer against someone :

سئمت تكاليف الحياة ومن يعيش

ثمانين حــولاً لا أب لك يســأم

And the connotations in the living Arabic language of Egypt are far from pleasant. The alternative, اليتيم, given in the variants in the body of the essay has the unfortunate Arabic meaning of being 'unique', 'the one and only', 'one of a kind', from the assumption that the father who begot the child is dead and there can be no hope of having any similar person. Hence the title of al-Tha'aalibi's book, يتيمة الدهر or Time's Orphan; and hence Shawqi's famous line :

بأبى وروحى الناعمات الغيدا

الباســمات عن اليتيـم نضـيدا

The reference is, of course, to the teeth that can have no equivalent, being unique in that sense.

رَأَيْتُ تِلْكَ الطَّاقَةَ الجَبَّارةَ المهيبة	3
بكُل ما رُزِقَتْ بِهِ وقدْ قَامتْ حِيالِى :	4
أَحْسَسْتُ أَنَّى تائِهٌ وغَامَ بَصَرِى ,	5
كَأنَّ غَيْمَةً هنا قَدْ غَشِيَتْنى	6
وأَنَّنى استُوْقِفْتُ – لكننى لَمْ أَسْعَ للنفاذ مِنها	7 (530)
وبعْدَ أَنْ أَفَقْتُ من غِمارِها قُلْتُ لِنفْسى	8

(3) The coupling of adjectives is peculiarly Arabic. Sometimes the second adjective is added for emphasis and may have no meaning in itself but could later come to acquire a similar meaning :

خراب يباب – عطشان نطشان – أديب أريب – معن مفن

and so on. But here the second adjective is an echo of 'awful' in line 534, and, of course, a reinforcement of the first.

(4) 'Endowments' is ambiguous; I have opted for the more obvious meaning. In the course of the essay I suggest that it may also imply the capacity for 'endowing' man with 'powers'.

(5) غام بصرى is added, suggested by الغيمة . The word for cloud is deliberately chosen to suggest that very meaning.

(6) For يغشى see " يوم تأتى السماء بدخان مبين يغشى الناس " (*Smoke*, 11), and the relevant إذ يغشى السدرة ما يغشى (*The Star*, 16). The rule of collocation may have suggested the verb – which does not exist in the English text – but seems to prepare for the series of religious images that follow.

(7) استوقفت should have been أوقفت but I have shunned the word because it has come, strangely, to mean 'arrested' in certain Arab countries. A regional dialect cannot be ignored, even if wrong according to the rules of normative correctness.
النفاذ is better, I believe, than يشق طريقه on account of :

« إن استطعتم أن تنفذوا من أقطار السموات »
(*Al-Rahman*, 33)

(8) الغمار is particularly apt, I believe, though it does not exist in the text, because of the image of the cloud.

الآن أُدْرِكُ مَجْدَكْ ! لَقَدْ أَخَذْتِنِى أخْذاً شديداً	9
وزُرْتِنى زِيَارَاتٍ بها من الوُعُود ما أَفْزَعَنِى	10 (535)
فَعِنْدَهَا يُشِعُّ الحِسُّ ومْضَات تُميطُ لِثَامَ عَالَمنا الخَفِىِّ	11
وعندها نَرَى مَعْنى الجَلال ! .	12

(9) مجدك is ambiguous. It can refer to the soul or to imagination. More important is the religious implication, as noted in the text. For أخذتنى أخذاً شديداً

see (الحاقة - ١٠) « فأخذهم أخذة رابية »

and (المزمل - ١٦) « فأخذناه أخذاً وبيلاً »

The original text gives "in such strength of usurpation" but any use of غصب or, of course اغتصاب could have a connotation of 'rape'. The religious image is that of imagination 'grasping' or 'holding' the poet so hard, perhaps as reported in Prophet Muhammad's Biography when archangel Gabriel first visited him. Another verb such as ضَمَّ or قبض may have been used, but then the meaning is to 'cause pain by force' and this is what the Arabic text suggests. The interpretation is reinforced by what follows.

(10) The words 'visit', 'visitings' and 'visitations' are crucial to Wordsworth's concept of divine communion; the word is therefore rendered literally.
أفزعتنى carries part of the meaning transferred to line 3 in المهيبة – and the sense of fear in Wordsworth is important :

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Foster'd alike by beauty and by fear;

A.I. 305-30.

(11) الحس is an imperfect translation of the five senses, but a word in the singular is needed to stand in contrast with العقل (line 534). ومْضات should be ومَضات, but I here make use of poetic licence.

(12) معنى is added as part of the paraphrase; the literal sense is هنا يسكن / يقيم الجلال But the fact that جلال is a common name in Egypt made me shun the metaphor of staying in a house. As for the alternatives to جلال such as عظمة or رفعة or سمو , the text does not seem to accommodate any of them.

بَلْ إنه مأواه إنّ كُنَّا شَبَاباً أو شيُوخاً	13
وما مَصيرنا وطبْعُنَا وبيتنا إلا الأزلْ	14
وهو الأَمَلْ - أَمَلٌ مُحَالٌ أنْ يَمُوت	15
والجُهْدُ والرَّجَاءُ والتَّمَنّى	16
والعَيْشُ فى دَيْمُومَةِ الزَّمَنِ	17
والعَقْلَ حينَ يَهْتَدى بهذه الرَّايات فى كِفَاحِه	18
لَيْسَتْ تُهِمُّهُ الأَسْلابُ والغَنَائِمْ	19
أو أىٌّ شاهدٍ على البَأْسِ الشَّديدْ	20
إذْ إنَّهُ يَبِيتُ نَاعِماً بأَفْكَارٍ مبَارَكةْ .	21 (545)

(14) For بيتنا one could read منزلنا or مقرنا or مَثْوَانَا – but I have opted for the obvious. For infinitude the Arabic word seems closer than اللانهائية to what is meant.

(16) By 'desire' Wordsworth could never have anything else in mind !.

(17) The line is exceptionally difficult for it does, before Bergson, refer to time as a flux – the most relevant passage which must throw light on it ocurs in Book II :

> the soul
> Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
> Remembering not, retains an obscure sense
> Of possible sublimity, to which
> With growing faculties she does aspire,
> With faculties still growing, feeling still
> That whatsoever point they gain, they still
> Have something to pursue.
>
> MS. V.: V. ii. 334-341

As such, time becomes a perpetual feeling – a flux with no end, no beginning.

(21) ناعما means ينعم بـ and is added to clarify the cocept of نعيم (bliss) suggested by the religious context.

فِيهَا كَمَالُهَا وثَوَابُها ! فى ذَاتِهِ قُوَّتُهْ 22

وفى مَنَاهِلِ الفَرْحِ التى تُخْفِى مَنَابِعَهْ 23

كالنِّيلِ ذى الفيض العميم . 24

(22) Note the maintained religious terminology.

Chapter IV
TRANSLATION AS COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

(i)

When in my *Comparative Tone* (1995) I argued that any reading of a foreign text should be regarded as an exercise in comparative literature, I deliberately avoided any direct reference to modern critical 'Theory', especially the deconstructive approach and intertextuality. My assumptions had been established with reference to my experience in teaching English texts to Arabic speaking students and the semantic distortion which resulted from every Arab reader's use of his or her native Arabic in reading foreign texts. To draw conclusions about the relevance of deconstruction to literary translation would be, I thought, premature : what I had in mind was a clear thesis about the need to refer the Arabic reader to what can be assumed to be his or her native literary experience, deeply embedded in his or her culture (of which Arabic is the paramount manifestation) whenever an English text is taught. I offered the arguments for and against doing this via translation; and concluded my essay with questions rather than answers. The upshot of the whole exercise was, however, that the more conscious the teacher was of the native tradition, the more successful he would be, in all probability, in driving home the 'meaning' (or meanings) of an English text. An act of comparison was needed, I argued, and, whether the reader is conscious of it or not, acts of comparison are involved in every reading of a foreign text, which I thus described as a comparative situation.

My initial approach in that essay relied on the 'Games' theory, popularized by Berne (Berne, *passim*), and when I spoke of the formula I made an effort to avoid the now common use of *écriture*, literary codes, sense and reference (*Sinn und Bedeutung*) cratylism or, indeed *differance* and dissemination ! I had set out to show that there was an inherent formula in each work of art which, approved by both author and reader, should be conducive to a common *understanding* of the 'sense' of the words, even at the most superficial level. The formula would not change much when a foreign reader shares a common culture with the English text : the modifications in the formula will be concerned with points of interpretation affecting the tone, but not resulting in a drastic alteration of the poetic meaning of the text. A Russian *Hamlet* will of course, be different from a French *Hamlet* (cf. *Heylen, passim*) but the basic tragedy at Elsinore should remain the same and would certainly share more with the Shakespearean original than any Arabic *Hamlet* will ever hope for. A Danish reader of the play will no doubt have a deeper appreciation of the Fortinbras menace; but no Arab reader will or can share such an appreciation. The play will remain foreign to him or her, unless done into Arabic and made to refer, for instance, either to abstract questions about the meaning of life and death, or the vendetta traditions of upper Egypt : and in both cases the difference could result in a totally different play. I had posed an important question at the end of that essay : can a 'faithful' translation represent the original ? The mechanics of translation themselves militated against such a possibility; for a successful translation, seeking to address itself to a 'native' audience, will employ the 'cultural terms' of Arabic in order to reach their hearts, and must of necessity move farther away from the original : and it must refer the audience to their

own native literature, widening the distance and forcing the emergence of a *comparative situation.*

In this chapter I hope to show that every literary translation, from English into Arabic or vice versa, regardless of the translator's ability, must involve *comparative moments*, and must therefore be regarded as an exercise in comparative literature. A comparative moment may be defined as the 'turning point' (definition 6 in the OED) where the translator opts for a word, a construction, an idiom which must refer the reader to his or her own literary tradition, and whose *significance* cannot be grasped except through his or her own culture. Intertextuality here must be taken to mean interculturality (after the Frankfurt School).[(1)] The semantic ramifications of such *interculturality* must be dealt with, as I hope to prove, through the Derridan principle of *dissemination* and the allied Saussurean notion of *difference* : the Arabic terms chosen at the 'comparative moments' will have infinitely changing meanings, so much so that any reading of the translated work must represent a new interpretation, and any translation may thus be regarded as a new work however closely related to the original text or thought of as a faithful rendering of the 'sense' of the text.

Generations of Arabic translators have produced many versions of Shakespeare, Shelley and, say, Wordsworth, and the body of translated works has been the subject of many academic studies, with the criteria consistently being regarded as faithfulness to the original. My argument will suggest that we may have as many Shakespeares, Shelleys and Wordsworths as there are translators, as many versions as there are linguistic communities in the Arab world, and as many interpretations as there are generations of readers. My contention is that each

translation is not only an act of interpretation but a work of art equally capable of 'appreciation' in terms of its own language (the target language – TL – into which it is done) as is the original work; and that it is an intertextual work within the terms of its own literary tradition. So much so, in fact, that the 'comparative moment' could be seen as both deconstructive and intertextual at once – as far, of course, as the original works are capable of this. To accept, therefore, one of the central tenets of deconstruction, namely what Jonathan Culler calls, quoting Barbara Johnson, the 'careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text' (Culler, p. IX) is to fall back on what the New Critics had been trying to do. However, while the New Critics might have allowed a degree of transparency for language, following the 'linguistic philosophy' of Russell, Wittgenstein and Ryle, the 'extremist' deconstructionist critic will not allow such transparency. The capacity of a linguistic sign to refer the reader to a feature of reality *outside the text* was not so frowned upon by the New Critics; the shades of meanings or the tone-dictated interpretation could not, for most of them at any rate, negate the presence of meaning : it could be tentative, tenuous, controversial, paradoxical, even self-negating, but there must be some sort of meaning. And the idea of meaning itself will become untenable unless it is somehow related to external reality. Barbara Johnson states, in an interview with Imre Salusinszky, that

> if it is indeed the case that people approach literature with the desire to learn more about the world, and if it is indeed the case that the literary medium is not transparent, then a shadow of its non-transparency is crucial in order to deal with the desire one has to know something about the world by reading literature (Salusinszky, 166).

And to speak of *Knowledge* is to assume a valid basis for a relationship, if not for verification of the validity of the relationship of *words* to external reality. Hawthorn, who quotes this passage (1994, p. 33) notes that it is 'so buttressed with qualifications that it would be hard to disagree with'. He believes that Johnson's rejection of the 'self-involved textural practise of "close reading"' attributed by Salusinszky to the New Critics establishes a 'distance' between Deconstruction and the New Criticism. The real problem will be how to define the 'close reading' meant by the interviewer in his *Criticism in Society*, 1987, a book which adopts a Marxist approach from beginning to end and which argues for 'uncovering' the hidden strategies in the text, which definitely takes the reader outside it to the real world (p. 167). Any such admission should be alien to the true deconstructionist, who must at all times respect Derrida's dictum that 'there is nothing outside the text' (1976, p. 158). Indeed how can deconstruction uncover, analyse and 'expose' the contradictions except through a "close reading" ? In *Positions* (1981) Derrida denies the notion of a 'finished signified beneath a textual surface' (p. 63) insisting here as elsewhere that all reading is 'transformational' – and the 'transformation' must be done at the semantic level, with reference to an outside reality. Culler's 'warring forces' cannot even begin to be seen as 'warring' unless there is a solid objective basis, somewhere 'out there', against which to establish and thence to gauge the antagonism.

The other element in the 'comparative moment', the intertextual force, belongs to the thinking of the major critics of our time, notably to Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes. Kristeva tells us that each text is in effect a 'permutation of texts, an intertextuality : in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize

one another' (Kristeva 36) which is far from a satisfactory definition. It is imprecise, and the presumed 'neutralization' is never obtained in reality : even a text that is enmeshed in the verbal web of other texts will have, if well designed and internally 'harmonized', cutting edge. Leon S. Roudiez, the translator of Kristeva's book, possibly anticipating a degree of miscomprehension, provides a more accurate definition, and one that is certainly more relevant to our consideration of literary translation. He states that it means 'the transposition of one or more *systems of signs* into one another, accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position' (Kristeva, 15). A translation must be the ultimate in the implementation of such transposition; though even within the same language we can have a similar process, varying in degree, of course, where each text may be regarded as an 'intertext', which, as defined by Barthes, is a 'general field of anonymous formulae whose origins can scarcely be located' (Barthes, 39). In literary translation, when a conscious attempt is made by the translator to sound *idiomatic*, references to works in his or her native language will sometimes be more obvious and easy to trace; the question of anonymity will be irrelevant, for as Barthes reminds us, 'there is always language before and around the text' (Barthes, 39).

(ii)

Let us begin, therefore, with a passage, that is professedly intertextual :

> The Chair she sat on, like a burnished throne,
> Glowed on the marble, where the glass
> Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines

From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wings) 5
Doubled the flames of seven branched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion
In vials of ivory and coloured glass 10
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid — troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air
That freshened from the window, these ascended
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames, 15
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.
Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.

T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, II, 1-20

which obviously parodies, or echoes :

Eno. The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water; the poop was beaten gold,
Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that
The winds were love-sick with them, the oars were sliver
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster
As amorous of their strokes. For her person,

It beggard's all description; she did lie
In her pavilion, — cloth-of-gold of tissue, —
O'er picturing that Venus where we see
The fancy outwork nature; on each side her
Stood pretty-dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid did.

Agr. O, rare for Antony !

Eno. Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,
And made their bends adornings : at the helm
A seeming mermaid steers; the silken tackle
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands
That yarely frame the office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of adjacent wharfs.

Antony and Cleopatra, II, ii. 198-219

The lines quoted are those (about 20 of each) thought to correspond, in the view of most critics, in the light of the intertextuality invited by Eliot. They have been the subject of extensive analysis, with the critics repeatedly focusing on the deliberate differences which underscore Eliot's purpose.[(2)]

The substitution of a 'chair' for the 'barge', and of 'marble' for water is meant to show, we are told, the loss of the glory of the past, and how material opulence has vulgarized the scene of 'noble love'. We often read that Eliot is being satirical, ironical or scathingly critical of

the interest shown by modern man in material things : the life which had throbbed underneath the barge, with the implied reference to the Book of Genesis, even to the act of creation connected with the water, is now frozen. The use of marble is an all too obvious reference to the tombstone or mausoleums. Life is contrasted with death, as the 'natural' love scene created by Shakespeare for Cleopatra's first encounter with Anthony is replaced by a 'Game of Chess', a scene of contending wits and wills, when a man and a woman face one another, head to head, each trying to beat (rather than win over) an opponent. In other words, rather than the harmony of love, we now have the discord of battle. So much has been said, so much has been granted.

Let us turn to the most influential Arabic version of Shakespeare's lines, Lewis Awad's :

كان الشراع الذى جلس فيه يبرق على وجه الماء
كأنه العرش الوضاء [(3)]

For the barge, Awad uses an easy-to-grasp synecdoche, the 'sail' (a common rhetorical trick in both languages, cf. *The Ancient Mariner* 'A Sail ! A Sail !') and the addition of the 'face' to the water clinches the Biblial reference, clearly implied by the "thorne". The Quran, like the Bible, maintains the image. 'His Throne was on the water' (هود - ٧) (وكان عرشه على الماء) . By choosing الوضاء in rendering 'burnished', Awad again reveals his consciousness of the religious implications of the image : 'burnished' does not, at least not in Shakespeare, mean 'glowing' (Eliot's term). Here is what the OED says :

1. To make shining by friction; to furbish, to polish by rubbing with a hard and smooth tool. Also *fig*.

2. *transf.* To make bright and glossy ME.

3. Of a stag : to rub the dead skin from his horns 1616.

4. *intr.* To become bright and glossy; to shine, gleam. Also *fig.* 1624.

The capacity to 'impart light' could not be read in Shakespeare's word, for up to Milton's *Paradise Loss*, many decades after Shakespeare's play, the meaning was confined to 'shining' (Fruit burnisht with Golden Rind, 1-249, Book IV) and even in Swift (I've seen a snake ... Burnish and make a grandy show). The Arabic الوضاء is, however, laden with the religious implications of ضياء (light) that is, self radiating· (الذى جعل الشمس ضيـاء والقمر نورا (يونس - ٥) and the common word for ablution is الوضوء , that is, the 'acquisition' of light ! The verb يتوضأ , rarely thought of literally, means to acquire light, but referentially means to do the rites of ablution. Where does Awad get his meaning from ? Can Derrida's 'dissemination' help ? 'Burnt' on the water exercises a direct influence, albeit backward, on the 'act of burnishing', turning it into an intransitive verb, with 'burning' being slipped into it ! It is as though Awad, a notable English scholar, had also Blake's 'burning bright' in mind, but, primarily, the etymological core of the English word; for in Old French *burnir* had been a variant of ***burnir***, the direct progenitor of 'burnish} ! The words are internally allied and metathetically related. Saussure would not disagree. This is an instance of cratylism which should help to bring out a further significance of the word : *burn*, brown ! The old French word still exercises its power, and the glimmering lights of the 'throne' are not to be separated from the Egyptian queen, a 'brow of Egypt', swarthy by definition, in comparison with Helen's beauty. (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V.i. 11).

The inherent 'variety' is first glanced at by the translator's use of the verb يبرق , a verb not used in this form until recently : the Quranic برق (القيامة - ٧) is ambiguous and has been variously rendered as 'to flash', 'glisten', 'gleam', 'glimmer' etc. The origin is, of course, the noun البرق — i.e. lightning. And that is why the 'variety' is described here as inherent : for the verb, even in spite of the context, almost always suggests the noun, a linguistic feature hardly peculiar to Arabic, so that the image as rendered in Arabic retains the original 'flashings' (to quote Wordsworth's *Prelude*) which are the precise equivalent of the 'burning' process 'on the water' ! Awad reverses the order of the sentence here, beginning with the clause containing the powerful verb, as an intuitive act of foregrounding, needed to reinforce the sense of the 'lightning' inherent in the verb. And 'lightning' is associated in the Quran, as in the religious tradition (cf. *P.L.*) with God (الرعد - ١٢ ،) (الروم - ٢٤) and is related, in one notable verse, to the word for light used by Awad أضاء (البقرة - ٢٠) .

The significance of all this is that Awad's interpretation produces an equivalent in terms of Arabic culture, that is, the culture of a language difficult to separate from the Quran, which casts a giant shadow over our entire tradition.

The translation is therefore a re-working in Arabic of an English image. The choice of the synecdoche at the opening is hardly incidental; for Lewis Awad knows full well that the Arabic فلك (*fulk*) will not do, associated, like سفينة (*Safinah*) with trading vessels or with Noah's Ark – cf.

(« ويصنع الفلك وكلما مر عليه ملأ من قومه سخروا منه » هود - ٣٨)

(« وأما السفينة فكانت لمساكين يعملون فى البحر » - الكهف)

What he wants is a word that creates the 'feeling' of the blowing wind, and avoids any suggestion of 'commercial shipping'. The original "barge", now rendered in Arabic as بارجة (*barigah*) (which has come to acquire military connotations) shares the etymological source of 'bark' (The Skarfed barke puts from her native bay, *The Merchant of Venice* II, vi, 15; 'My Spirit's bark is driven / Far from the shore, Shelley). The inherent suggestion of شرع (to start, to establish a law, to make lawful) cannot be avoided; and the result is that we have a meaning not confined to 'a sail' but which covers the act of 'sailing' or, of 'embarking' on a (lawful ?) relationship between Anthony and Cleopatra, already in the air ! The invocation of the cosmic setting, the Book of Genesis, and the act of creation itself, seals the Arabic image.

Now what could an Arabic translator of Eliot's lines do to avoid such 'holy' atmosphere ? To echo Awad's translation, and replace the Shakespearean words with their Eliotic equivalents in Arabic will never do ! For here we face an equally religious term in Arabic – Chair ! As every Arab reader knows, the 'Chair' refers in the Quran to God's throne and no Arab synonym or near-synonym will ever be different. Think of مقعد and the verse « في مقعد صدق عند مليك مقتدر » will immediately come to your mind (The moon, 55); or consider the Quranic near- equivalents سرير (pl. سُرُر), or أريكة (pl. أرائك) or متكأ etc., all related either to the luxury of paradise or to Biblical stories retold in the Muslims' holy book. The first of these alternatives, Sareer, could also mean 'throne' —

فسبحان الذى أعطاك ملكاً   وعلمك الجلوس على السرير

while the second and third (etc.) could not refer to individual chairs but to 'sofas' or perhaps to any 'seat' or seating 'facility', to use a horrible

modern term. But the initial word is not the only problem. The context, as will be shown, reinforces the equally religious 'meanings'.

The first attempt at echoing Lewis Awad's version must therefore come to grief :

(١) كان الكرسي الذي جلست فيه يبرق على وجه الرخام / كأنه العرش الوضاء

What are the available alternatives ? Consider :

(٢) كان الكرسي الذي جلست فيه ، يتلألأ على الرخام / كأنه عرش براق !

(٣) كان المقعد الذي تجلس فيه ، يعكس أضواءه على الرخام / كأنه عرش براق

(٤) كان المقعد الذي تجلس فيه ، كأنه عرش لألاء / تبرق أضواؤه على الرخام

The variants can multiply, with omissions and accretions suggested, if not strictly dictated by the text itself. But is Eliot's reference made only to Shakespeare's Cleopatra ? Look at the following lines, the opening of Book II of *Paradise Lost* :

High on a Throne of Royal State, which far
Outshon the wealth of *Ormus* and of *Ind*,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings Barbaric Pearl and Gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd
To that bad eminence;

P.L. II, 1-6[4]

The 'reflections', to use a modern term, are more than 'flickers' : they are vigorous, direct and explicit. The notion of 'height' is repeated with variations intended to 'undercut' its meaning, as the deconstructionists have shown, turning the aporias into 'positive' moments of negation. The 'High' of line one is transformed into a 'bad eminence', through material opulence precisely in the way Eliot builds up the rest of his

passage, 'the seven-branched candelabra' and the 'frozen' pagan gods (Cupidon). The 'shining' takes us in Milton through 'wealth' and 'richest hand', through barbaric pearl and gold, to an 'exaltation' (and a raising, line 5) that must be evil ! And in so far as Satan literally means 'adversary', the images are built up on an intricate web of adversarial relationships : for the underlying emotion is one of vanity, of individual pride, hubris, of showiness, of tawdry wealth that uncovers the real poverty of spirit. The surface light reflected remains 'surface light' to the end; and the more the gold, the more the 'outside' reflection; and this is what Gold says elsewhere :

> Many a man his life hath sold
> But my outside to behold !
>
> *(M. of V.)*[5]

The implication is, therefore, that Eliot is not simply invoking a single passage in Shakespeare, but a whole tradition, equally valid in Christianity and Islam; for the scourage of material wealth, especially gold and silver, is established in literature almost universally.

The comparative moment occurs, therefore, whenever a translator armed with the knowledge of his native culture, refers the text he reads in a foreign language (in this case, English) to that culture. The choice of لؤلؤ and the verbs derived therefrom يتلألأ and its cognates, must reveal a consciousness of Milton's 'pearl'; and the departure from the gold of Shakespeare's 'barge scene' (the poop was beaten gold !) will mark the change of the movement (that eternal sign of life) into stillness — death. No translator can afford to ignore the climax of the Shakespearean passage where the peak of the 'living fire' (and 'live coals') is reached :

— To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool
And what they undid did !

The boys fanned the cheeks of Cleopatra; it was, obviously, hot. But instead of cooling them, they fanned higher the fire burning in her cheeks, live coals, for all interests and purposes ! And to conclude this portion of my argument, I shall have to provide Awad's translation which is as original a reading as a work of inspired creation :

فلا تدرى إن كانت ترطب خديها أم تذكى فيهما نار الجمرات

فترطب حيث تلهب ، وتلهب حيث ترطب !

(iii)

The synecdoche chosen by Awad for the barge will now serve as a starting point for a discussion of a specimen of modern Arabic verse, which is equally worthy of diachronic handling. Awad opted for الشراع — and modern readers, brought up on the verse of the 'revivalists' — Shawqi and Hafiz — will immediately recall Shawqi's poem يا شراعاً . Here are the opening lines :

يا شــراعاً وراء دجـلة يجـرى	فـى دموعـى تجنبتـك العـوادى
سـر على الماء كالمسيح رويـداً	واجر فى اليم كالشعاع الهادى
وائت قاعاً كرفرف الخلد طيباً	أو كفردوســه بشاشـــة وادى
قـف تمهـل وخـذ أماناً لقلبى	مـن عيــون المهـا وراء الســواد

(شوقى ، ٨٨)

and here is an approximation of the meaning :

O sail that, past Tigris, runs in my tears !
May you be safe from all disasters !

Oh, gently pass, like Christ, on the water,
But shoot as a guiding light in the river !
Lay anchor at a bank as fragrant as heaven,
A vale, as sweet smiling as the Paradise of Eden,
Stop or pause, to shield my heart in the vale
From the charming eyes behind the dim bower veil !

Sung by Abdul-Wahab, but banned on account of its reference in the end to King Faysal I of Iraq, the poem has been banished from the tradition of a whole generation. People of my age, however, know it by heart and wonder at its 'mysteries'. Even in translation, the mysteries will be as taunting, though translation must primarily be an act of interpretation. Passing over the regular problems of 'unravelling' the meaning — if there is one meaning — I shall simply point out the not so obvious references to the Arabic tradition which render any real translation impossible. I shall not, for instance, question the meaning of وراء دجلة (beyond ? in the tributaries of ?) or the ambiguity of في دموعي — (while my tears flow ? in the stream of my tears ?) or the contrast between 'pass' and 'run' — leading to 'stop, or pause' (reminiscent of Wordsworth's 'stop here or gently pass !') but shall focus only on the two expressions drawn from our ancient tradition, and are therefore impossible, as said, to render satisfactorily. The first is وخذ أمانا , the second عيون المها ! Today's الأمن and الأمان are security and safety, respectively; which simply have nothing to do with the meaning. What the idiom means according to our ancient tradition, is 'protect' or 'shield', with a pronounced suggestion of a force that is given to changes of mood, being whimsical or wayward, often identified as 'Time', or 'the Times', الزمن أو الزمان — and more particularly as the temporal authority usually represented by the Arab ruler. Typically an

Arab ruler wields absolute power; if a Caliph he will invoke the power of the word of God, claiming to abide by the dictates and injunctions of Allah (as interpreted, of course, by his 'men'); if a temporal ruler, he will invoke the public interest (Shakespeare's 'general good') and speak 'in the name of the people'; but often enough he will waive all claims to 'fairness' and presume to 'know best', as big brother, what the people (the subjects) want. This is a power to be protected from, of course, at all costs; and the old adage says :

ثلاثـة ليـس لهـا أمان   البحر والسلطان والزمان

that is, there are three forces no one can be sure to be 'shielded' from their danger (vagaries, whims, vicissititudes ?) namely the sea, the ruler and the times ! The contemporary meaning of أمان (safety) will add the diachronic significance to the image :

Help me to be safe from the darting
Arrows of eyes so charming !

But the precise meaning is : 'help me to acquire a pledge of safety from the eyes', as people were wont to ask the ruler before speaking. A word uttered in the presence of a ruler may spell death for the speaker, whether he had a pledge of safety or not ! Hence the difficulty of establishing a single meaning for the expression : the historical implications are there and are essential to the significance : I may have a pledge of safety, but then how can anyone be safe in the presence of those eyes ? The inference is usually to the eyes of 'Maha' — that is, she-bisons ! An eye of a bison is said to be the paragon of beauty, big, round and black ! but the original meaning is now a relic of a defunct, amusing origin : the real reference is to the line :

عيــون المــها بــين الرصافــة والجســر   جلبن الهوى من حيث أدرى ولا أدرى

that is, the charming eyes I saw between al-Russafah, a place, meaning an embarkment and *al-Jisr*, i.e. the bridge, made me fall in love unawares, even as I looked on (or, alternatively, both consciously and unconsciously !) Indeed, '*maha*' though plural has come to be such a common name for girls, of course, that no one at all, except the pedants, will question the original meaning. But it is the وراء السواد that causes real problems, for it allows both senses of 'behind the grove' and 'behind the veil', and the ambiguity is unresolvable.

So we get back to the 'sail'. The reference is of course to a sailing boat; and Shawqi leaves us in no doubt about the literal meaning. In the opening of his long 'Major Events in the Nile Valley', we come across the word again quite bluntly, as he begins by referring to the steamer calling it الفلك (*fulk*) then proceeds to address the 'age of steam', thus :

يا زمان البخـــــار لـــولاك لـــم تفجـــع بنعـــــمى زمانـــــها الوجـــــناء

فقديماً عن وخدها ضاق وجـ الـ   أرض وانســـاب بالشـــراع المـــاء

(شوقى ، ١٨)

That is, 'O Steam age ! Had it not been for you, the she-Camel would still be enjoying her blissful time ! Of yore, she speeded about; the face of the earth being too small for her, with the water flowing, carrying the sail(s) about !'

The memorable opening, in which Shawqi uses every trick of the trade to display his linguistic virtuosity, is impossible to render in English :

همت الفلك واحتواها الماء   وحـداها بمـن تقـل الرجـاء

(شوقى ، ١٧)

The ship sailed / embarked / moved [with the implication of wanting, desiring to act] and the water surrounded it / engulfed / embraced [though the original meaning is 'contained']; she was led, together with her passengers, by hope [with the suggestion that the 'leading' was the musical note, the song or the verse of the man leading a caravan in the desert الحادى). Shawqi's distinction in the above-quoted lines between the 'steamer' and the 'sailing boat' given simply as الشراع , precisely as Lewis Awad does, is all his own; for *al-Fulk*, as we shall see, was also a sailing boat. However, the use of الشراع later on, in the poem, which is meant to distinguish the ancient sailing boat, does not invalidate my argument. For it has also been used as a near-literal word for 'ship'. Lewis Awad was not, in effect, being rhetorical at all; for the synecdoche is in a very real sense a metonymy based on Jakobson's principle of contiguity. The fact that he has 'chosen' the 'sail' rather than the patently 'poetic' فلك shows that a deeper force worked in his mind than rhetoric. '*Al-Fulk*', as I hope to show, will never be equal to الشراع in this context. I must here give the full text of a beautiful poem by Ahmad Rami where the ship is consistently referred to as '*fulk*' and the actual sail it has as الشراع :

أيها الفلك على وشك الرحيل   إن لى فى ركبك السارى خليل

رقرقت عيناى لما   قل لى حان الوداع

وبكى قلبى مما   شاع فى الكون وذاع

غابت الشمس وراء الأفق   ثم ذابت فى مسيل الشفق

لهف نفسى كاد يخبو رمقى

حين حيانى حبيبى   وتبادلنا الوداع

وانطوى منه نصيبى   عند تصفيق الشراع

أيها الفلك على وشك المغيب   قف تمهيل إن لى فيك حبيب

لا أذوق النوم حتى نلتقى   والضحى يغمر وجه المشرق

فأحييه بقلب شيق

شارحاً وجدى

شاكياً سهدى

فى الدجى وحدى

وأناجيه بحبى   بين ضم واعتناق

ناسياً آلام قلبى   طول أيام الفراق

(رامى ، ٣٦)

To go into the 'binary oppositions' in the poem which cry for analysis by every reader, even the most opposed to structuralism, is to take us outside the scope of this essay; but in the course of rendering some of the lines certain features will appear to confirm my initial argument. To begin with, let us see what the opening lines mean :

> O ship about to sail,
> Among the passengers you carry
> During this [night] journey
> I have a bosom friend

The square brackets are, of course, meant to indicate an addition, though the added sense is it in fact basic to the word, and all Quranic translators render الإسراء as *The Night Journey*. The famous proverb عند الصباح يحمد القوم السُّرى literally means 'at daybreak the travellers are grateful for the night journey', that is to say, for having had to travel in the cool of night rather than in the sweltering heat of the day. But such is the habit of language, Arabic being no exception, that the original

meaning has tended to get increasingly fainter, so that the verb يسرى has become a modish variant of يسير , not a morphological version (based, on course, on metathesis) but a poetic alterantive. A modern dictionary would give us 'pass', 'depart', 'visit' as well as to 'journey', 'walk' or 'go' (not necessarily at night) as possible modern meanings. A common idiom الطيف السارى means the 'visiting image' of the beloved, that is, the recalled image. And the nearest meaning of ياليت طيفك يسرى (in a poem again by Rami) is 'I wish I could recall your image' rather than 'if only your image could visit me / come to me / or pass by me'.

The complex of meanings in ركبك السارى is in fact due to the association with the ancient Arab custom of a caravan leaving at sunset (as the above mentioned proverb implies). The imminent departure of the ship, here rendered as 'about to sail', begins the implied image of the caravan about to leave, and the Arabic الركب literally means 'riders'. The image of the train of camels, with men and women on their backs, is therefore the subtextual reference, and, though there are few verbal echoes from an actual literary text, the intertextual relation with the Arabian 'desert' in traditional verse cannot be missed. One is reminded of Al-A'sha's ودع هريرة إن الركب مرتحل [Bid Hurayrah farewell, for the riders are about to depart] or the modern كأنى طاف بى ركب الليالى [either : as though the night-riders passed by me' or 'as though the train of nights, (riding into infinity) passed by me'].

Equally problematic, and even more so, is '*khaleel*', rendered as 'bosom friend'. To begin with, it is masculine, while the intended person is understood to be feminine. But then it could be either : and to insist that it is feminine, as is the rule with Arabic poetry, must cause it

to lose part of the meaning. The translation adds 'bosom' to deepen the sense of friendship, but the word by itself need not have this depth : many Arabic poems begin by an address to 'my two friends' خليلَيّ , while apostle Arabhim is called in Arabic Ibrahim Al-Khalil; that is who is very close to God (hence the Arabic name of Hebron الخليل the town in Palestine). In the Quran, خُلّة simply means friendship, albeit a little deeper than ordinary friendship. The point is, however, that we have 'a parting love' (to quote Wordsworth yet again) rather than a travelling friend ! The second stanza may be decisive, opening with :

أيها الفلك على وشك المغيب
قف تمهل إن لى فيك حبيب !

O ship about to go,
Stop, pause, for my sweetheart
Is on board !

The poet has here repeated the same structure, with a few variations drawn from the scene of cosmic sunset, a sunset turned into a scene of general departure, of separation almost comparable to death. The Arabic المغيب has no exact equivalent in English – غاب الشمس the sun has set, the sun went down etc. but غاب and الغياب can refer to disappearance, to vanishing. We may refer in English to the sun 'going down' (or even 'sinking to his rest') but never to a ship unless we do mean her 'going down' ! To render the words as a simple disappearance is almost to destroy the image (the ship regarded as a sun). I have again given 'stop, pause' as an English equivalent of ! تمهل ! قف but, as mentioned in dealing with the same idiom in Shawqi's above–quoted lines, one could again resort to the Wordsworthian phrase "stop here, or gently pass !" The meaning is, of course, 'pause a while', that is, don't go just now !

But before we go back to our starting point (our 'sail') we should ourselves 'pause' to consider the implications of the use of '*Fulk*' فلك here and in the opening line.

Arabic is a language with a phonetic system that shares a great deal with the Egyptian language (and my Coptic Etymological Dictionary, fully confirms this). The short vowels are not part of the script, and the marks suggested by a notable grammarian (cf. شوقي ضيف : المدارس النحوية) are not always observed, nor are they in fact a real substitute for an inherent system of marking the vowels – a lack in Egyptian described by Erdman as 'maddening' (Erdman, 340). A word like *Barq* used by Awad in his rendering of Shakespeare, is, we know, an Egyptian word written, like its Arabic version without short vowels : BRQ برق (the semitic stem being brk – and the coptic *ebrq* that is أبرق). variations in the 'short-vowel system' have produced forms which apparently look unrelated but which often represent branches of the same 'root' (should be 'plant' / 'tree' ?); and the Arabic dictionaries consistently give us the root, consisting mostly of only three or four letters, then the variations which in many cases rely on semitic languages system (cf. النحو في اللغات السامية : رمضان عبد التواب).

A 'root' like MLH ملح – [the Coptic *mlh*, originally Egyptian, which later gave rise to identical Hebraic and Armaic versions] can generate many words, each related to the original. Arabic morphology has witnessed a remarkable revival, so that we are now able to establish hitherto unthought-of relationships with other languages, thanks to modern linguistic science : the variation of the vowels allowed between the three consonants has been studied and fruitful conclusions have been drawn. The short 'i' after the first consonant will give us a noun

meaning 'salt', and the adjective 'salty'. The long 'a' after the first, followed by a short 'i' after the second will give the adjective only : a short 'a' after the first followed by a long 'i' after the second will give us a word meaning 'good', 'nice' or 'beautiful'. Variations of vowels like the short 'o' (or 'u') will generate words meaning 'an amusing anecdote' or a 'joke', and the verbs derived therefrom can proliferate in many directions.

The right approach to a word like '*fulk*' (a ship) which is plural, dual and singular, in Arabic, both masculine and feminine, may require us to look up '*falak*', the solid 'root' of consonants with short 'a's supplied in between. Indeed, any dictionary in Arabic will prefer to supply such short vowels in between the three basic consonants, as though this must be the real root verb (though we now know that such hypothetical forms sometimes never occur in real language use). Still, to assume that this is the root is to admit a relationship not explicitly established in the major dictionaries between the two words. Under this root, however, *The Arabic Tongue* لسان العرب gives us many meanings which, I believe, cannot be totally unrelated. From Ibn Manzour we learn that *Falak* means orbit, with a possible plural *fulk* ! We also learn that the '*falak*' of the sea is its 'round heaving waves'; it is also the 'curvature of the firmament, the celestial vault / arch'; it can also mean 'any jutting turf, any round dune, bulging, heaving'; in the feminine form a *falkah* (the final *ah* being the feminine ending) can mean a little hillock; the plural being *falk*, and *falak*. Only after having gone through all such morphological forms, and their many variations, does Ibn Manzour give us the divers meanings of *fulk* as ship. His immediate source is, of course, the Quran, and its exegeses, but many lines of verse are given (and a great number of 'rulings' by notable

grammarians) to stress the variety of the forms such a word may take. In modern usage, *al-Falaki* is both an astronomer and an astrologer ! The Egyptian Arabic *felukah* is a small 'sailing boat'. To go through the dense semantic jungle is to be more sure than ever that the two words are related, and that the 'poeticism' of the word must have its source in this sense of 'orbiting motion', the 'cyclic journey' of the stars, of the earthly satellites, their rotundity and cosmic implications.

When the poet (Ahmed Rami) zoomed in on his departing *fulk*, leaving behind the setting sun, the vast horizon and the 'grief-hued twilight', he could see an actual sail 'flapping' : as it was being unfolded, the ship being seen as a bird flapping her wings before taking to the air, his life with the beloved was being folded. The ship started to move (a life, conceived in terms of movement, was beginning – an important meaning of the root شرع) while the significant life he knew, the only kind of life he cared to know was coming to an end. It is to the solid core of root consonants (شرع) that we should turn therefore to grasp the full implications of Lewis Awad's choice of the word. There is hardly any need to go to لسان العرب once again to feel the conglomerate meanings of شراع ; no serious critic can safely banish the other meanings of the word even if they only worked subliminally in the reader's mind.

Cleopatra's beauty was being shown – proclaimed, flaunted, flapping in the air – a weapon drawn from its sheath مُشْرع , even as she was about to embark on a new relationship تشرع , which was 'promulgated' as a law of love, even though the world regarded it as unlawful مشروع وغير مشروع معاً ! The reader may believe that such meanings cannot be immediately perceived in the Arabic text; indeed,

they may never be perceived by the reader of the translation, but a student of the diachronic dimension of language must consider all such possibilities which Culler insists are there and may have an effect ('subliminally' is his word) on the reader.

(iv)

If every text is an 'intertext', and the translated text equally intertextual, how can the Arabic translation produce the "parody' effect ? More boldly posed : is parody possible at all in Arabic ? Parody, according to Dupriez (1991), is a 'conscious and deliberate imitation, either of content or form which intends to achieve a mocking, or simply a comic, effect'. (327) Cuddon, Frye and Preminger agree. Linda Hutcheon gives a more detailed discussion of the 'modes' of parody in her *A Theory of Parody*, with original insights into the vital differences (and the common features it shares with) satire ('a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured' Dr. Johnson), pastiche (entertaining complications or imitations); skit (a short piece of humorous writing or theatrical sketch); and revue (a satirical set of sketches on contemporary themes). Dupriez calls these 'analogues', and we may have to believe him, judging by the English examples provided by Halsall who translated and adapted the book : but in that case, Eliot's parody of Shakespeare's lines will not be 'parody' strictly defined; and the Arabic translator will be free to do what he or she likes to do with it ! Eliot's intention cannot be described as explicitly 'humorous' or, indeed, immediately 'comic'; and the lines are not intended to poke fun at Shakespeare's work or him world, nor do they echo Shakespeare in the way his definite parody of Goldsmith does :

When lovely woman stoops to folly
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can sooth her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away ?

O. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, ch. 29

When lovely woman stoops to folly and
Paces about her room again, alone,
She smoothes her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone.

T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, Part 3,
(The Fire Sermon)

And for good measure let us look at this glaring example from *The Faber Book of Parodies*, (174).

When lovely woman stoops to folly
The evening can be awfully jolly.

Mary Demetriadis

The effect of the parody is striking : in both cases we cannot help being shocked by the change in the 'moral' outlook, even if 'we' were on the side of the permissiveness of modern times. The parody in each case destroys the meaning of the first line, so that the remaining 'sense' becomes confined to the simple reference to sin (carnal sin, that is, a term repeatedly scoffed at by the 'modernists'). In Eliot 'folly' comes to be denuded of its original meaning; in Demetriadis its meaning is, or can be, reversed. The purpose of parody in each case is therefore to strike a blow at the 'attitude' of the original lines, to which we apply the technical term of tone. Not so with Eliot's 'Game of Chess' : the tone of the lines is lofty, and the elaborate imagery deliberately apes the

elaborateness of the Shakespearean scene. It is deliberate because Eliot wants to produce a subtle comic effect, not immediately obvious, and almost as serious as his *grande finale* : the person dealt with is low – the 'heroine' here is not a queen, not a character 'better than ourselves' (to use Aristotle's terms) but definitely lower; and the discrepancy between language and subject produces a 'burlesque effect' which, if read correctly, could be humorous indeed. This is certainly one game an author can play (cf. Hutchinson, 94-5, for a discussion of the burlesque). The discrepancy generates tension, and because the 'action' in the scene is delayed and given in snippets, the change of tone is difficult to recognize at once.

This aspect of intertextuality has hardly been dealt with in terms of tone, for the authors of modern critical 'Theory' do not allow for the fact that some languages are not as well equipped as others for a downward change of tone : Arabic, MSA and archaic Arabic that is) is one such language. A translator intent on producing a parody of a Shakespearean text will face the major obstacle that his or her intention will never be recognized, as very few Shakespearean texts are well known to his or her readers. It may not be an exaggeration to say that even a parody of a most famous Arabic poet like Al-Mutanabbi will not be easily recognized. Only if some of the lines of pre-Islamic classical verse, learnt at school and not taken very seriously as great poetry, are parodied can the writer hope to be appreciated; as when Abdul-Hamid Al-Deeb parodied Umru' Al-Qays :

مــكر مفــر مقبــل مدبــر معــاً   كزنبور صيف يقرص الرأس من عل

But even so, the effect is purely humorous, and the entire work of Abdul-Hamid Al-Deeb is dismissed as 'humorous verse'. Notable too

in this connection is Bayram Al-Tunisi's 'Maqamat' where the target of his parody is not specific poets or writers, but certain 'situations' dealt with in a variety of MSA and Egyptian Arabic.

The problem is, I daresay, insuperable. To opt for a 'lofty' Arabic style, defined in terms of our classical writers, is to provide a different chronotope for Eliot's poem : the reader would be invited to travel in time and place even beyond Shakespeare and the entire body of English literature. To use MSA with variations showing the change of tone will require an effort not every reader will be willing to make, and a diachronic knowledge of Arabic which is not readily available. The Egyptian Arabic option is hardly an option at all, or is it ?

The problem with Egyptian Arabic, as it is the probem in fact with many varieties of the living versions of Arabic currently used in speaking and thinking throughout the Arab world, is that it is not as yet recognized as the language of the 'canon'. 'Serious' writers shun it like the 'plague' (to quote Naguib Mahfouz) either because they believe, rightly or wrongly, that it is less capable of capturing the minute and subtle thoughts and feelings dealt with in the 'canon' than archaic Arabic or even MSA, or because they associate it (after Auerbach) with 'low' style. The result is that whenever a text is written in Egyptian Arabic, the conclusion is made that it must belong in the realm of realistic literature (according to the old definition of realism as an imitation of real life situations and speech) and must therefore belong to the 'masses} who are, up till now at any rate, mostly uneducated (if not illiterate as well) and consequently (primarily on account of their ignorance of archaic Arabic) incapable of producing or receiving 'high' literature-*Kunstpoesie*.

The average reader in Egypt, as well as in many parts of the Arab world, has been encouraged to accept this view by the extremes of vulgar verse now creeping into the lyrics and songs of the popular tradition as true folklore, with the vulgarity here defined as combining obscenities, swear words, nonsensical catch phrases, and words and expressions with imprecise or no meaning at all. Real poetry is no doubt often produced in Egyptian Arabic, and beautiful specimens are to be found everywhere in collections that have been well received by the major critics and the public (like those by Salah Jaheen, Omar Najm, Sayed hegab, Abdul-Rahman Al-Abnudi etc.) but the lines of demarcation have tended to be hazy, and the average reader cannot equate a text in this language with any in classical Arabic or MSA.[6] Some serious critics, even when they have separated themselves from the typical condescending attitude of the critical potentates, find that the mere choice to write in Egyptian Arabic betrays either an ignorance of the 'masters', or a measure of pandering to contemporary taste – in either case deplorable.

The problem has been compounded by questions not related to 'reception' (or 'reader response criticism') at all, but to the fact that Egyptian Arabic, is not in fact so independant of MSA or even of archaic Arabic (cf. the introduction to this book). As convincingly shown by Badawi (*passim*) it is Arabic, and it has, according to him, three levels, the highest of which is close enough to to MSA. It is only the suppression of inflexion that sometimes marks the 'popular' variety (الريح تبـاريح جـريح مـا ينتـهى له أنين) and sometimes the reference is strongly made even to archaic Arabic, with the intertextuality so pronounced that no reader at all can miss it :

اللحم طين والعروق دود من ديدان الطين

آدم وحوّا على أرض العدم حاطّين

عاقبهم الرب .. أخرجهم من الجنة

ادم عمل حضن حوا جنته وغنى

والناس بتتهنى ... مهما يكونو منحطين (7)

[The following rendering is only one of many variant Arabic translations which lay no claim to utter faithfulness; it does, however, approximate the 'sense'.]

> With flesh of clay, with veins no better than
> Clay-bred worms, Adam and Eve are sinking
> To mortal earth, descending,
> Punished, expelled by the Lord from heaven,
> In Eve's embrace Adam found a new heaven,
> And to her kept singing !
> People find happiness, though sinking low
> Though hopelessly descending !

As should be obvious I hope from both the original lines and the translation, the tone is only apparently facetious : the pity image, based on a solid paradox, is conveyed in kinds of paronomasia impossible to render into English. With the Biblical and Quranic story so vivid in our minds, we inevitably 'refer' the poet's words to a lofty context; some expressions are straightforwardly archaic (or MSA), with key words from the Quran like ' أخرج ', and ' الناس ', but others which have posed serious problems in the translation are archaic (or MSA) with Egyptian connotations. one such word is العدم – rendered here as mortality

(literally الفناء) though used as a transferred epithet above – but which can in fact give more meanings in Egyptian Arabic (حالـة عدم) . My point is, however, that here we have a case of lines in Egyptian Arabic which are closely related to MSA, not only by the lexical level but by an intertextual device close enough to parody. The paradox of ascending to a heaven of love, though descending to an earth of mortality, reverses the meaning of the original story and can thus answer to the definition of parody strictly defined. The frivolous tone, however only apparent, becomes a potent means of achieving this – a tone easier to create in Egyptian Arabic than in archaic or MSA, but which is helped here by the implied intertextuality. Though no generalizations regarding tone can safely be made, one is tempted to conclude that the tone of Egyptian Arabic can always pose a threat of frivolity. Look at the following versions, the first in classical (both verse and prose), the others in Egyptian Arabic of the opening lines of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* :

> If music be the food of love, play on;
> Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
> The appetite may sicken, and so die.

1. a) (MSA verse)

إن كانت الأنغام قوتاً للغرام فاعزفوا ثم اعزفوا
وأتخموا شهيتى حتى إذا غصت
فربما سقمت وماتت !

b) (MSA prose)

إذا كانت الموسيقى غذاء الحب فاستمروا فى العزف
حتى إذا ما أتخمت شهيتى
فربما اعتلت ، وربما ماتت !

2. a) (in Egyptian verse)

إن كان الحب بيتغذى ع المزيكا . . . دقى يا مزيكا !

مين يِشْمنْى ويسدّ لى نفسى

لَجْل اقتل جُوَّاى الحب !

b) (in Egyptian verse)

إن كان الحب بيحيا وبيتغذى ع الموسيقى

يبقى علينا بالموسيقى

أنا عايز قلبى يطفح موسيقى ونفسى تنسد

وما عدتش م التخمة أشتاق للحب !

c) (in Egyptian prose)

إذا كات الموسيقى هى اللى بتغذى الحب . . ما تبطلوش عزف

أنا عايز آكل واتبشم عشان نفسى تنسد

وما عدتش أحب !

It may be an exaggeration to claim that the Egyptian versions sound more parodies of the original lines, than real translations ! The tone implied by key words and phrases is so powerful that they actually control the tone of the entire passage (or lines) so that any suggestion of seriousness, however remote in the original, is totally banished. Perhaps this is what Shakespeare has intended Orsino to sound like, as confirmed by the modern performances of the play; but the lines as they stand can allow a degree of seriousness denied by a catch phrase like دقى يا مزيكا (which can metaphorically mean many things as different as : 'face the music !', 'There is hanky-panky there !' and, the purely British, 'Hallo, hallo, hallo !') or a crucial word like أطفح (which in

MSA means 'to overflow' but in Egyptian Arabic can mean either 'to eat', with connotations of unwholesome food, or a far from enjoyable meal, or contexts confined to extreme vulgarity such as the swear-phrase (شا لله أطفحه / والا أطفحه !).

The option for Egyptian Arabic is therefore beset by questions of intertextuality that cannot be skirted : one should try one's hand at the actual possibilities before theorizing or appeasing the academic community with pleasantly sounding arguments. I have not found a satisfactory solution to the peculiarly Egyptian problem of intertextuality purely arising from the diachronic relations of archaic and Egyptian Arabic; to do any text into Egyptian Arabic is to commit oneselt to tones almost hopelessly pre-determined by the waggish uses to which many key words and expressions are put in Egypt. Not that we are a particularly playful people : the point is that because Egyptian Arabic is a living language, because used in thinking and speech, the possibilities of tone are infinite – a quality lacking in archaic Arabic.

The reader is invited to try to provide an Egyptian versions of any of the translations of Eliot's lines included in the Appendix : the exercise will, I am sure, further prove my point. Comparisons will corroborate my initial argument, namely that literary translation may legitimately be approached as a branch of comparative literature. To accept such an argument is to invoke more questions and face increasing problems – but then this is the scholar's lot, and there can be no answers, no solution or contribution, without first asking the questions and recognizing the problems.

NOTES

1. Richard Wolin, *The Terms of Cultural Criticism : The Frankfurt School, Existentialism, Post-Modernism*, New York, 1992.

2. See in particular the discussion in the 1970s of the effect of such parody on the 'conflict' of voices in *The Waste Land* in A.D. Moody (ed.) *The Waste Land in Different Voices*, London, Edward Arnold, 1974; passim; Grover Smith, *T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1974, pp. 73 ff.; Helen Williams, *T.S. Eliot : The Waste Land*, London, Edward Arnold, 1973, passim; Derek Traversi, *T.S. Eliot : The Longer Poems*, London, 1976, pp. 31 ff.; C.B. Cox and Arnold P. Hinchliffe (eds.) *T.S. Eliot : The Waste Land*, Macmillan, 1972, passim; James E. Miller, Jr., *T.S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land : Exorcism of the Demons*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977, p. 82, and A.J. Wilks, *T.S. Eliot : The Waste Land*, Macmillan, 1971, pp. 46 ff.

3. أنطونيوس وكليوباترا - ترجمة لويس عوض ، الطبعة الثانية ، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب ، القاهرة ، ١٩٨٩ .

4. Cf. The following translation into Arabic by M. Enani :

عالياً على العرش الملكى - عرش يبز
لألاؤه كنوز هرمز والهند
أو حيث يغدق الشرق الرائع بكف الثراء
أنداءه على ملوكه ، من لآلىء البربر ونضارهم
جلس إبليس ! رفعه قدره إلى

أسمى مكانة فى الشر ، ورفعه يأسه

حتى تجاوز الأمل !

(ص١٣٧)

ملتون – الفردوس المفقود – ترجمة محمـد عنانى – الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب – القاهرة – ١٩٨٢ .

5. Cf. The translation of the entire song of Gold in *The Merchant of Venice*, by M. Enani :

All that glisters is not gold,
Often have you heard that told
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold ... etc.

ما كل بـراق ذهـب   مثل يدور على الحقب

كم باع شخص روحه   كيما يشاهدنى وحسب

شيكسبير – تاجر البندقية – ترجمة محمد عنانى – الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب – القاهرة – ١٩٨٨ .

6. For a detailed analysis in Arabic of the problem of classical vs. Egyptian Arabic poetry, see my

من قضايا الأدب الحديث – القاهرة – الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب – ١٩٩٥ .

7. صلاح جاهين – عن القمر والطين – القاهرة – دار المعرفة – ١٩٦١ .

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APPENDIX

Arabic versions of Eliot's cited lines by Lewis Awad (from فى الأدب الانجليزى الحديث).

١ - على الرخام لمع المقعد الذى عليه جلست
كأنه العرش الوضاء ، حيث ارتفعت المرآة
على أعلام موشاة بالكرم ذى الأعناب ،
ومنها أطل كوبيد ذهبى
(وأخفى آخر عينيه خلف جناحه)
فضاعفت المرآة شعلات الشمعدان .
ذى الشعلات السبع .
وانعكس منها الضوء على المائدة
لحظة أن انبثق بريق جواهرها للقياه
صاعداً من احقاق مبطنة بالدمقس ، متدفقاً فى فيض عظيم .
وفى قوارير من العاج والزجاج الملون بلا سدادة ،
كمنت عطورها الغريبة المركبة
بين زيت ومسحوق وسائل ،
فأزعجت الحواس وبلبلتها وأغرقتها فى الروائح .
ولما حرك هواء النافذة الرطيب الروائح
صعدت ، فى لهب الشموع المستعرض المستطيل
وقذفت بدخانها على مربعات السقف الخشبية ،
فهزت المشق المنقوش
على السقف المجوف كأنه الصندوق .
وفى السقف اشتعلت أخشاب البحر الجسيمة
المطعمة بالنحاس الأحمر ،

باللهب الأخضر وبلون البرتقال
ومن حولها اطار الحجر الملون ،
وفى هذا الضوء الحزين سبح درفيل منقوش

by Nabeel Raaghib (from أرض الضياع).

٢ - المقعد الذى استوت عليه مثل عرش متألق ،
توهج على الرخام ، حيث المرآة
المثبتة على قوائم قدت من عناقيد كروم
من خلالها اختلس كيوبيد ذهبى نظرات
(وآخر أخفى عينيه خلف جناحه)
عكست لهيب الشمعدان بفروعه السبعة
والضياء على المنضدة
فى حين هرع وميض جواهرها للقائه ،
متدفقاً عن علب الحرير الأطلسى فى ثراء باذخ ،
ومن قوارير العاج والزجاج الملون
وقد فتحت أفواهها ، تضوع أريج عطورها الغريبة ،
مرهمية ، مسحوقة أو سائلة - مشوشة ، حائرة
فأغرقت الحواس فى عبقها المضطرب بين طيات الهواء
المتجددة من النافذة والصاعدة
لا طعام لهيب الشموع ذات العمر الممتد ،
فتكاثف دخانها بين أرجاء السقف المنحوت ،
لتدب الحياة فى صوره المتجسدة
صوب أعشاب بحرية كثيفة مطعمة بنحاس أحمر
متوهجة بالخضرة ولون البرتقال ، فى اطار من الحجر الملون ،
حيث سبح درفيل منحوت فى ضوئه الشجن

by M.S. Farid

٣ - كان الكرسى الذي اقتعدته يحكى عرشاً مصقولاً
ويلمع على الرخام ، وقد قامت المرآة
على قوائم تطعمها العرائش المزدهرة
وأطل منها كيوبيد ذهبى صغير
(ووارى آخر عينيه خلف جناحه)
فضوعفت شعلات الشمعدان ذى السبعة أفرع
وراحت تعكس الضوء على المائدة إذ
ارتفع بريق حليها للقياه ،
من علب الأطلسى التى سالت فى فيض غنى .
وفى قوارير العاج والزجاج الملون
الذى فضت سداداته كمنت عطورها الصناعية الغريبة ،
ما بين أدهنة ومساحيق وسوائل فأثارت الحواس وبلبلتها
وأغرقتها فى العطور ، ولما حركها الهواء
المتجدد من النافذة تصاعدت
لتزيد من لهب الشمعة المتطاول
ونفثت دخانها على السقف المزخرف ،
فحركت أنموذج السقف ذى الزخارف الغائرة
وقد راحت أخشاب البحر الكبيرة التى يطعمها النحاس الأحمر
تتوهج خضراء وبرتقالية إذ حفها الحجر الملون ،
وراح الدخس المنحوت يسبح فى الضوء الحزين .

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